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ABSTRACT

This document contains papers from a Pennsylvania conference on adult and continuing education research. The following papers are included: "Violence against Women: Looking behind the Mask of Incarcerated Batterers" (Irene C. Baird); "Refocusing Faculty Development: The View from an Adult Learning Perspective" (Patricia A. Lawler, Kathleen P. King); "Living and Learning with HIV/AIDS: Transformational Tales Continued" (Lisa M. Baumgartner); "Gender Differences in Distance Education and Technology: Familiarity, Comfortability, and Receptivity in the Hotel and Restaurant Industry" (David S. Bender, James A. Bardi); "Using Qualitative Case Study to Evaluate a Pre-employment Training Program for Adults" (Susan C. Biro); "Assessing the Effectiveness of a Faith-Based Learning Environment for Adults: A Case Study and Comparative Analysis" (Anthony L. Blair); "Evaluating the Value of Internships for Adult Learners" (Gary J. Dean, Kurt P. Dudt); "The Value of Higher Education: A Latino Perspective" (Denise K. Hay); "The Intricacies of Initiate-Response-Evaluate in Adult Literacy Education" (Patsy Medina); "Where Cancer Patients Receive Information: A Comparative Study with Patients and the Perception of Health Care Professionals" (Eileen Milakovic); "Adult Students Speak Out; A Focus Group Research Project" (Sherry Miller Brown), "Identifying the State of the Art: Measures Used to Assess Adult Learners in Even Start Family Literacy Programs" (Joe Norden Jr., Gary J. Dean); "Family Literacy and Adult

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Education: Informing Practices That Encourage Participation" (Stephanie Wexler-Robock, Kathleen P. King); and "More Than Just Reading and Math: Women in Adult Basic Education" (Lisa J. Wright, Kathleen P. King). Most papers include substantial bibliographies. (MN)

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Proceedings
of the

Fifth
Pennsylvania Adult and Continuing Education Research Conference

March 17, 2001
Indiana University of Pennsylvania
Indiana, Pennsylvania

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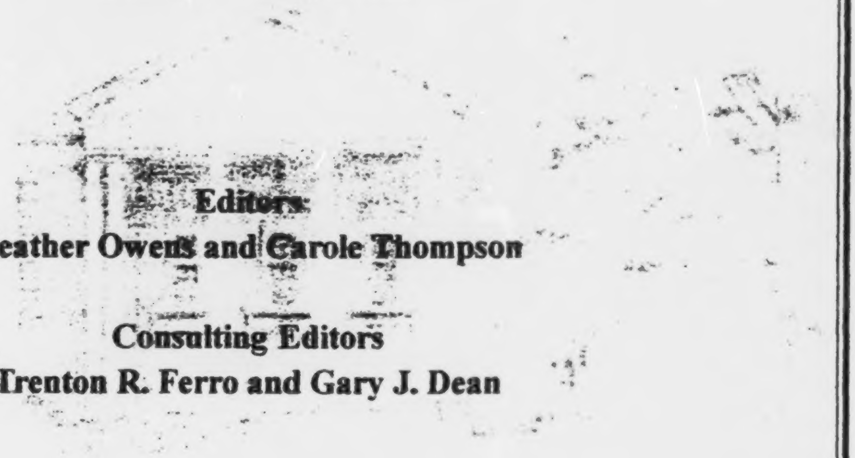

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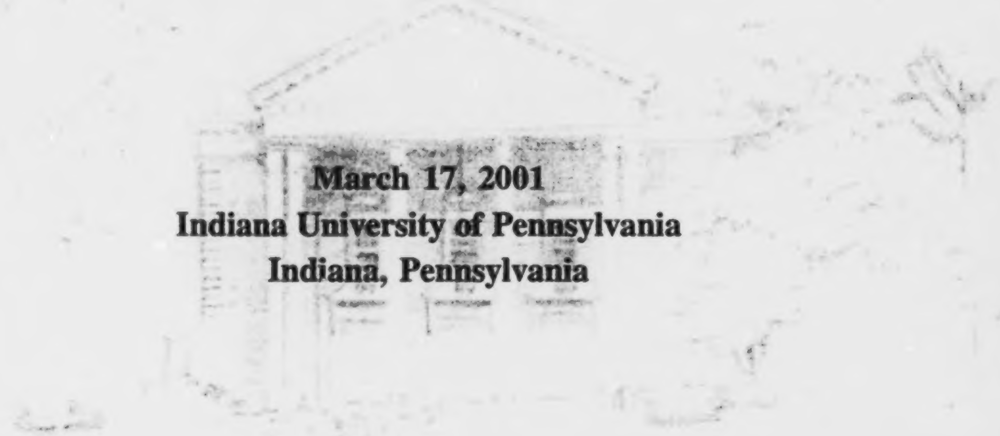

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Indiana University of Pennsylvania
March 17, 2001

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Acknowledgements

We extend a special "thank you" to Heather Owens and Carole Thompson for their extensive involvement in the planning of this year's program and for their conscientious attention to all the details necessary for making a conference successful.

We acknowledge the important role that National City Bank has played in this year's conference by printing the call for proposals, the program brochures, and the proceedings and thank National City for its tremendous "contribution in kind."

We gratefully acknowledge the significant role played by Pittsburgh Theological Seminary (PTS) in bringing Dr. Sharon Daloz Parks and Dr. Laurent Parks Daloz to Pittsburgh to deliver the annual Schaff Lectures at PTS. Without this sponsorship, Sharon and Larry would not have been available to deliver this year's keynote address. For information about continuing education programs available at PTS, contact the Rev. Dr. Mary Lee Talbot, Director, or Ms. Dayna Bokenkamp, Assistant to the Director, Continuing Education and Special Events, Pittsburgh Theological Seminary, 616 N. Highland Avenue, Pittsburgh, PA 15206-2596; phone: (412) 362-5610; fax: (412) 363-3260; e-mail: <mltalbot@pts.edu> or < dbokenkamp@pts.edu>; URL: <http://www.pts.edu/conted.html>.

Pennsylvania Adult and Continuing Education Research Conference

March 17, 2001

Agenda

8:30 am – 9:00 am	Registration & Refreshments	Foyer, Stouffer Hall
9:00 am – 9:20 am	Welcome Dr. John Butzow, Dean, College of Education Dr. James Peterson, Dean, The Graduate School and Research	Beard Auditorium
9:20 am – 10:30 am	Keynote Address Dr. L. A. Parks Daloz Dr. Sharon Daloz Parks	Beard Auditorium
10:30 am – 11:00 am	Break & Refreshments	
11:00 am – 12:00 pm	Concurrent Session I	
	Bender, David and Bardi, James "Gender Differences in Distance Education Technology: Familiarity, Comfortability, and Receptivity in the Hotel and Restaurant Industry"	Room 111
	Blair, Anthony "Assessing the Effectiveness of a Faith Based Learning Environment for Adults: A Case Study and Comparative Analysis"	Room 112
	Hay, Denise "The Value of Higher Education: A Latino Perspective"	Room 140
	Lawler, Patricia and King, Kathleen "Refocusing Faculty Development: The View from An Adult Learning Perspective" (Invited)	Room 113

Agenda Continued

11:00 am – 12:00 pm	Concurrent Session I (Continued)	
	Norden Jr., Joe and Dean, Gary "Identifying the State of the Art: Measures Used to Assess Adult Learners in Even Start Family Literacy Programs"	Room 141
12:00 pm – 1:00 pm	Lunch	Foster Hall
1:00 pm – 1:30 pm	Poster Sessions	Rooms 138/139
	Black, Linda "Computer Mediated Communication in Adult Distance Education: A Synthesis of American Experimental Literature"	
	Falkenstern, Sharon "Problem Based Learning: Implementation by Family Nurse Practitioner Faculty"	
	Humbert, Tamera "Spirituality in Adult Education: An Overview"	
	Truschel, Jack "Advising Strategies for the Non-Traditional Student in Higher Education"	
	Parratt, Angelic and Williams, Stefanie "LINCS: Your Online Research Assistant"	
1:30 pm – 2:30 pm	Concurrent Session II	
	Baird, Irene "Violence Against Women: Looking Behind the Mask of Incarcerated Batterers" (Invited)	Room 141
	Medina, Patsy "The Intricacies of Initiate Response-Evaluate in Adult Literacy Education"	Room 140

Agenda Continued

1:30 pm – 2:30 pm	Concurrent Session II (Continued)	
	Milakovic, Eileen "Where Cancer Patients Receive Information: A Comparative Study with Patients and the Perceptions of Health Care Professionals"	Room 112
	Miller-Brown, Sherry "Adult Students Speak Out: A Focus Group Research Project"	Room 111
	Wright, Lisa and King, Kathleen "More than Just Reading and Math: Women in Adult Basic Education"	Room 113
2:30 pm – 3:00 pm	Break & Refreshments	
3:00 pm – 4:00 pm	Concurrent Session III	
	Baumgartner, Lisa "Living and Learning with HIV/AIDS: Transformational Tales Continued"	Room 111
	Biro, Susan "Using Qualitative Case Study to Evaluate a Pre-employment Training program for Adults"	Room 112
	Dean, Gary and Dudt, Kurt "Evaluating the Value of Internships for Adult Learners"	Room 141
	Wexler-Robock, Stephanie and King, Kathleen "Family Literacy and Adult Education: Informing Practices that Encourage Partnerships"	Room 113
4:00 pm	Adjourn	

Keynote Address

"Questions that Matter and Stories that Count"

Small questions with limited significance can dominate the research agenda while big questions haunt our civic life. How do we illumine and inform the human imagination with the tools of research?

L. A. (Larry) Parks Daloz
Acting Director and Faculty
Whidbey Institute
Clinton, WA.

Sharon Daloz Parks
Associate Director and Faculty
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L. A. (Larry) Parks Daloz is currently Acting Director and Faculty at the Whidbey Institute in Clinton, WA. He is the award-winning author of *Mentor: Guiding the Journey of Adult Learners* (the second edition of *Effective Teaching and Mentoring: Realizing the Transformational Power of Adult Learning Experiences)* and co-author of *Common Fire: Leading Lives of Commitment in a Complex World.* His most recent publication is "Transforming Learning for the Common Good," a chapter in *Learning As Transformation*, edited by Jack Mezirow. Larry was formerly professor at Lesley College and the founding dean of Vermont Community College, he has served as faculty advisor in the Vermont College Adult Degree Program and faculty mentor in the Johnson (VT) College External Degree Program, and he has taught in the AEGIS program at Columbia Teachers College and for the Harvard Institute for Management of Lifelong Learning. His international experience includes service as a Peace Corps Volunteer in Nepal and an educational planner in Papua, New Guinea.

Sharon Daloz Parks is Associate Director and Faculty at the Whidbey Institute in Clinton, WA, and is also on the faculty of the Executive Leadership Program, Seattle University. She is the author of the just published *Big Questions, Worthy Dreams: Mentoring Young Adults in Their Search for Meaning, Purpose, and Faith* and of *The Critical Years: Young Adults and the Search for Meaning, Faith, and Commitment.* She is co-author of *Common Fire: Leading Lives of Commitment in a Complex World*; *Can Ethics Be Taught? Perspectives, Challenges and Approaches at Harvard Business School*; and *To Act Justly, Love Tenderly, Walk Humbly*, and she is co-editor of *Faith Development and Fowler.* Sharon formerly held faculty and research positions at Harvard University in the schools of Divinity, Business, and Government; Weston Jesuit School of Theology; and Whitworth College. Her international experience includes serving as an instructor at Hong Kong Baptist College.

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Pennsylvania Adult and Continuing Education Research Conference
March 17, 2001

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Invited Papers

2001 Pennsylvania Adult & Continuing Education Research Conference

Invited Papers

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN: LOOKING BEHIND THE MASK OF INCARCERATED BATTERERS

Irene C. Baird

ABSTRACT: Addressing violence against women by sharing battered prison women's written accounts with incarcerated male abusers, in a Freirian/humanities adult education program, confirmed the feminist perspective of male entitlement, female subordination in a sociohistorical context.

INTRODUCTION

According to a January 11, 2000, Associated Press article, "Intimate murder claims nearly 4 [American] women a day," adding that "difficult challenges remain" in resolving violence against women (Crary, 2000). In December, 1999, Johns Hopkins Center for Health and Gender Equity (CHANGE) reported that, globally, "one woman in every three has been battered, coerced into sex, or otherwise abused in her lifetime . . . that, increasingly, gender-based violence is recognized as a major public health concern and a violation of human rights" (Heise, Ellsberg, & Goettemoeller, 1999). In 1995, the Beijing Fourth World Conference on Women, for its Declaration and Platform Action Plan, devoted an entire session to this issue. Exploring and addressing violence against women, therefore, is an enormous undertaking charged with emotion and controversy especially when confronting legal, cultural and social legacies and influences on gender roles. This study looked at the problem from a feminist perspective in the sociohistorical context of male entitlement and female subordination. The purpose was to examine the impact of a Freirian/humanities-oriented "inward journey" model (Baird, 1997) on male identity and definition formation, supported by the Newman, Lewis, and Beverstock (1993) research that emphasizes the importance of the cognitive approach within humanities for socializing the inmate, for developing an awareness of self and society.

WHY MEN BATTER:
SOME THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES

The literature on violent intimate relationships states that men are the perpetrators in 95% of the cases but adds that many men do not resort to violence when feeling provoked by a partner (Belknap, 1996; Goodyear-Smith, 1999; Heise et al., 1999; Marleau, 1999). Regarding those who do, the literature is separated into two broad categories: *excuses* and *justifications* (Belknap, 1996). The *excuses*, a deficit construct which denies responsibility, attributes battering to factors such as learned behavior, family abuse, poverty, limited education and low moral reasoning (Newman et al., 1993). As a developmental history issue, Newberger (1999) is cited since he is a pediatrician specializing in the treatment and prevention of family violence. He discusses some male characteristics that provide insight and include, aggression, which appears between six months to two years of age, and the adverse affects of a boy (more than a girl) being left unattended by a single mother. Newberger also notes that the younger a boy develops a prejudice, the more rigid he is apt to be. This book includes recommendations for parents of male children with the implication they will be addressed. Of particular interest to this study is Newberger's (1999) obervation that when males grow up they tend to expect females to provide for most of their needs, and the recommendation that parents must help boys to grow up not treating females badly, indicating that the male should give back the nurturance he received from a woman.

The Newman et al. study (1993) focused on male inmates' deficiencies which include a 75% rate of illiteracy. Among the risk factors for their unsocial behavior, the researchers included Kohlberg's stages of moral reasoning which were developed partly in response to prison environments. According to the references on Kohlberg's theory, moral acts of will are informed by reason, with prisoner's reasoning found to be at the lower stages. Newman et al. (1993), therefore, recommend an educational paradigm with the cognitive aspect of humanities programming to change values, beliefs and attributes which are unrecognized by prisoners as causative factors for their behavior.

Justification, alternatively, looks at the battering male through a socially constructed gender lens, in a sociohistorical context. Used by prisoners more frequently than *excuses, justification* is equated with entitlement, a patriarchal legacy that tolerates and glorifies aggression. This perspective draws heavily on the work of criminal justice feminist scholar Belknap (1996) since it synthesizes the findings of acknowledged researchers in the field such as Dutton, (1998); Ptacek, (1988); and Walker, (1979). Men batter because it is an effective way to control women and because they feel entitled to do so. Those who batter have violent-prone personalities; they are jealous, possessive and have traditional views of women. The batterer blames the woman for initiating such behavior: she is lazy, unfaithful, prepares a poor meal, is unresponsive to his sexual needs. As king of his castle, he can treat his intimate partner any way he chooses because she is his property and, as a "child", she needs to be disciplined, to be taught a lesson. In addition to cultural and social institutions, TV and the media validate aggressive behavior; therefore, the male who batters does so because he can, because such behavior is not considered aberrant.

METHODOLOGY AND DATA COLLECTION

Based on the success of the ongoing humanities program with incarcerated females which uses women's literature as a reflection, discussion, writing medium for promoting esteem, identity and empowerment (Baird, 1997), the prison administration extended an invitation to implement the model collaboratively with the men's counselor for sex abusers in a county jail. Instead of established authors, the "literature" link for meaning-making and understanding was writing of incarcerated women who had experienced abusive relationships–physical, psychological and emotional–and who volunteered to share their personal stories. The men in this study ranged in age from 19 to late 40's and were predominately African American. Some were court-ordered for ongoing counseling; others requested permission to receive the counseling, to learn to change.

A series of three critical humanities reading and writing sessions was conducted; each series consisted of ten weekly meetings. Some sessions were held in the cell block with all inmates present (35-40 men); smaller groups (20-25 men) met in the multipurpose room for more in-depth discussion and for group interviews. Frequently the reading and discussion of the women's stories was followed by interaction with the male counselor, especially in a situation where the inmates questioned or could not accept as accurate what a battered woman had written. His role was to address such issues from a counseling perspective. To reinforce that process, he always insisted that inmates refer to their victims, predominately intimate partners, by name rather than in pejorative terms, which were also explored for negative sexual implications and/or connotations. He employed role-playing techniques to reinforce a point and elaborated on both behavioral aspects and socially-constructed gender roles. Data were gathered over an eighteen-month period. Data consisted of a series of formal and informal evaluations and interviews of ten volunteers who participated in the humanities-oriented program on violence against women, using the personal stories of battered female inmates as the mechanism for generating reflections, discussion and writing. The men's oral and written responses were coded and analyzed for underlying thematic constructs (Kichlie, 1991; Patton, 1990; Seidman, 1991).

FINDINGS

Dominant themes that emerged were consistent with feminist research that labels alienation, family abuse, poverty--factors attributed to battering--as *excuses,* and entrenchment in the male role of entitlement, the *justifications* (Belknap, 1996). In a 1986 study on male spousal abuse, Williams turned to perspective transformation theory with male participants because, in part, most of the available information came from women's stories. In this study, it is precisely the battered women's stories that were the triggering mechanism for abusive incarcerated males to look behind their masks, to define themselves, and for their writing to become a personal inventory process for identity formation.

Two sets of writing resulted: one set, which became the men's publication, was thematic and often reflected the counseling component on dealing with identity issues generated by the women's writing. In this set, the men wrote about "the real me," pain and abuse. They addressed what it meant to be a man, and lost love. The unrecorded discussion that precipitated the writing was more detailed and used more explicit language, projected emotions that ranged from hostility, denial, not "understanding her problem" to feelings of regret and shame. In the other set, each participant provided a direct response to a specific woman's problem. In some cases the respondent assumed the role of critic, or offered advice; others addressed the abuse.

Who, then, is behind the mask? Defining "the real me" consistently began with descriptors such as loving, caring, kind, happy, liking to have fun and to make people laugh. Then, abruptly, many of the "real mes" continued with a *justification:* they liked to play mind games with people, they took anger and stress out on people who were closest to them "because I know I can get away with it." Others labeled themselves as monsters or animals when they weren't happy. "We had been together for a long time and I had been controlling . . .[I] started using drugs and ordering her around. I needed to know when she came home, where she was . . . I was overprotective of her. . . . [I] later found out she didn't like it." Their *excuses* for such behavior were consistent: "from the beginning I was separated from my mother and grew rebellious" or, because of parental abuse, they turned to drugs and alcohol, which precipitated violence.

Inevitably, group discussion turned to definitions of manhood. "What it means to be a man? Well, to me, [it] always meant to be in control over everything, not to be scared of nothing and never show your feelings or what we would call weak side because if we did we think it's a chump move or something so I always wanted to be in control and never let anyone control me and never showed my feelings." The other frequently cited definition of what it meant to be a man focused on fatherhood, "she looked like a red apple to be picked. We were real close . . . she would have had her first baby to me but we were about 17 years old. Her mom got her an abortion . . . I do miss her . . . she would have been my first to have my baby." Other men reflected on lost loves. For one man it was his dog. Several referred to mothers, some to their fathers. Another wrote, "I fell in love with the streets . . . gave myself to drugs and street life."

The second set of writings involved selecting one of the women's stories and responding to it directly. As examples, "She" wrote:

> Dad, when you started abusing me, you not only hurt me, but you scarred me as well. I can't talk to you on my own . . . 'cuz I feel like if I say the wrong thing to you when it's just us, you will backhand me.

One "He" responded:

> Every person does things in their own way. I'm sure if you asked your father he would say he loved you . . . . Talk to him. . . .You also have to do things for yourself, don't expect your father to be with you every step of the way.

Another "He" was reminded of his own father, of experiences that still affect him today . . .

> I learned he emulated things done to him by his father who I'm named after.

A "She" wrote:

> I remember when I was at my cousins . . . that I was rape [d] on her birthday. . . . [I] couldn't get away. . . . There were four of them, . . . so they all rape [d] me and then ran a pitch fork under my neck.

To which a "He" wrote:

> Well "sweetheart" the best thing to do is talk about it, to hold it in is too painful and you possibly could go crazy. Oh yes, please don't hold a grudge against your cousin . . . It would bring more stress on plus it wasn't her fault.

One of the inmates offered an overview of all of the stories that were shared.

> I didn't have a father in my life, my mother did it all by herself and she has made me strong. . . . Most of what I read was inspiring. Others, well, all I can say is that some of you need to consult professional help to deal with some of the issues that [have] plagued you. But all in all, they were very entertaining and upbeat. . . . Keep up the good work. . . . Knowing your problem is finding your solution.

Analyzing the writing and discussion, according to Newberger's (1999) stages of male development, the men's *excuses* for their behavior could have stemmed from unaddressed childhood hostility; prejudices, mainly towards females; inattention from a single female parent and alienation from a father. The men in this study, however, were not prone to *excuse* their behavior or to blame their situations to explain violence; rather, they blamed the victim. The men felt *justified* to do so because of their entrenched perceptions of women as "hos". Theirs were socially-constructed gender definitions reinforced by their father's behavior and attitudes. Those who admitted to wanting to change found it both difficult and threatening in the prison culture and on the outside. To them, being men meant being a non-trusting risk-taker, being in control in all situations and being entitled to wear the mask of violence.

Fortunately, the county jail provides ongoing counseling for sex abusers because for many of these men the doors have been revolving ones with their records including other infractions in addition to abusing women. The counselor frequently commented favorably on the humanities model because it generated discussion during and between sessions. The men indicated they like the process because it was a change from "traditional" counseling; it was as though they were really communicating with women they may have known. The following are examples of their written evaluations. One commented:

> Well I haven't been in to long but so far it has helped relieve stress and I'm starting to learn how to talk more about what's bothering me and I'm starting to own up to my wrong doings. It's not easy. . . . I really want to learn how to relieve my anger in a positive manor instead of resorting to violence all the time.

Another acknowledged that "I will get a better understanding of what abusive behavior is and what some of the characteristics are." and

> Without the means and confronting situations (negative as well as positive) of/from this group and the members/participants of or in it, I would never be compelled nor forced to look at my problems as such PROBLEMS. . . . I get "HELP" . . . from this group.

CONCLUSION

Though confined to a specific and limited male population, the result of this study on violence against women supports the patriarchal dependency model that sanctions male violence and female submissiveness. Feminist scholars are consistent in their advocacy for restructuring women's role, for "building a political, economic and social system equitable to women (Armon & Dawson, 1997; Belknap, 1996; Dupont-Marales, personal communication, February 19, 2000). The recent Hopkin's report considers the issue one of such magnitude that it requires long-term commitment and strategies from all parts of society to empower women, reach out to men, as in this study, to "change beliefs and attitudes that permit abusive behaviors" (Heise et al., 1999). Utilizing a Freirian/humanities format within adult education was a start. There is an implied need for more, continuing community-based involvement and the need for more extensive studies on violence. Expanding the topic from "who batters and why," the global implication, the "Right Question" for adult education needs to be imbedded in the roots of human rights and social justice. Our vision and quest for the millennium begs building on the Freirian foundation, examining the power and control issues at all levels that engender violence.

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REFOCUSING FACULTY DEVELOPMENT: THE VIEW FROM AN ADULT LEARNING PERSPECTIVE

Patricia A. Lawler
Kathleen P. King

ABSTRACT: The Adult Learning Model of Faculty Development draws from the research, theory and practice of adult learning and adult education program planning. This new model recognizes faculty as adult learners and faculty development as adult education. It offers strategies for effective initiatives.

INTRODUCTION

While the field of adult education has influenced many areas of education such as adult literacy, nontraditional college students, distance learning, and corporate training practice, it has not been comprehensively applied to faculty development in higher education. Adult education has successfully aided practitioners in other education settings by encouraging them to think about their students as adult learners and by introducing adult learning theory and practice. This paper discusses the authors' unique model that applies adult learning and adult education program planning principles to higher education faculty development, the Adult Learning Model of Faculty Development (Lawler & King, 2000). Refocusing on faculty development from this perspective has many implications for theory and practice.

Interest in professional development in higher education has gone beyond the traditional concepts of sabbaticals and academic discipline conferences and has focused on teaching effectiveness and classroom methodology. Faculty development is now being used to address the challenges facing our institutions in the 21st century, such as changes in student populations, advances in technology, demands for accountability and fiscal austerity (Boice, 1992; Brookfield, 1995; Cranton, 1996; Katz & Henry, 1996; Zuber-Skeritt, 1995). In spite of this increasing attention to faculty development, it is an area of education, which has yet to be informed by adult education theory and practice, especially with respect to how we work with faculty as adult learners. Smylie (1995) noted that when thinking about professional development of teachers the practices are "virtually uninformed by theories of adult learning and change" (p. 93); and Cranton (1996) observed that people who are responsible for instructional and professional development rarely view themselves as educators of adults.

The purpose of this paper is to present and discuss a model for faculty development that views faculty as adult learners and faculty development initiatives as adult education. This model incorporates the literature and research from the fields of adult learning, adult education, program development, and professional development to broaden and inform the perspectives of those responsible for faculty development in post-secondary institutions. Although sparse, recent research and writings on faculty development have shown that using the lens of adult education can be helpful in dealing with faculty development issues and concerns. (Carroll, 1993; King, 1998, 1999; Lawler, DeCosmo, & Wilhite, 1996; Lawler & Wilhite, 1997; Wilhite, DeCosmo, & Lawler, 1996). This paper builds on the literature by presenting a model to frame and direct faculty development in higher education from an adult learning perspective.

THE MODEL – KEY ELEMENTS

The Adult Learning Model of Faculty Development was developed to provide those working in faculty development with a formal characterization of the process of faculty development and practical strategies for developing and delivering faculty development initiatives. The conceptual framework relies on a rich historical literature. Recognizing that the purposes and philosophical orientation of different adult education program development models differ, our literature review draws upon common principles and practices of how adults learn and the best practices of adult education program development (Brookfield, 1986; Caffarella, 1994; Cervero & Wilson, 1994; Knowles, 1980). The model is grounded in the following adult learning principles: developing a climate of respect, utilizing collaborative modes of inquiry, building on participant experience, learning for action, and cultivating a participative environment (Brookfield, 1986; Cross, 1981, Knowles, 1980, 1989; Lawler, 1991). We also make several assumptions regarding the planning process based on the theories and practices of program development. We see planning as complex and ongoing, a nonlinear process where continuous evaluation can provide opportunities for improved effectiveness. Since planning occurs in a social, political, and organizational context, planners need to be aware of the ethical and social responsibilities they have as they work through the fundamental elements needed for effective programming.

This model was developed to expand the repertoire of those working toward effective faculty development on college campuses and it addresses three crucial points that are of concern today. The first concern surrounds the faculty, their characteristics, and motivation to learn and to change. By understanding the dynamic of the faculty's work in their professional roles, the faculty developer will have a better grasp of their needs, concerns and time restraints. Realizing that the faculty are content experts and may even be leaders in their academic discipline is important. The faculty developer who understands this and builds on a foundation of explicit respect for their expertise and experience begins from an adult learning perspective. Utilizing adult learning principles will provide a foundation for developing ownership, motivation, and participation in faculty development programs. This begins with identifying faculty learning needs, incorporating their voices in the process, and insuring the anticipated goals for change are relevant to the reward systems for faculty, such as tenure, promotion, and merit. The faculty's training as educators and their academic culture are important considerations for the faculty developer, who may not be a member of the faculty, to understand and respect.

The second concern examines the organizational context and its impact on faculty development initiatives. Faculty development does not occur in a vacuum. The social, political, and financial context of the academic institution has been found to influence the success, not only of programs, but also of effecting change. The climate and structure of the learning organization may either support or hinder learning, and astute faculty developers will learn to scan the organizational climate for ways to maximize the impact of their programs in light of their observations and analysis. For instance, if the faculty developer is an administrator who never had a faculty role, there may be resistance by the faculty to her proposals. We propose that in this case, the developer seek support utilizing a faculty committee, reaching out to faculty who are already creating change and creating a collaborative development process. Additionally, the larger context of higher education today is looking closely at faculty, their work, and their accountability. Historically, faculty development initiatives, which focused on academic research in a discipline, are now being supplemented with workshops, training, and programs directed at teaching effectiveness and educational technology. "Faculty, by nature of their profession, are self-directed in their work, independent and autonomous in getting their job done, and collaboratively participate in the policy and governance of the university" (Lawler & King, 2000, p. 14). It is imperative that we view faculty in their professional roles and not just as dependent learners or as a employees in a business setting.

The third concern centers on the identity of the faculty developer. In many cases those responsible for faculty development are not such by profession and may not be experts in adult learning, nor program planning. They may come from administration, faculty or outside the university as consultants. Establishing credibility with faculty may become a political process, which can inhibit success. Faculty may well be suspicious of administratively assigned faculty developers with little or no knowledge of classroom teaching or the role of the faculty. The Adult Learning Model of Faculty Development provides useful information for those both familiar with faculty issues and those new to developing programs. Regardless of the circumstances, faculty developers will benefit from understanding and using adult learning principles to effectively meet the professional development needs of higher education faculty. Characteristics of faculty developers who have such an understanding include: credibility, authenticity, respect, consistency, and responsiveness, along with practical experience and an understanding of the dilemmas and issues the faculty face in their everyday work (Brookfield, 1995).

THE MODEL – STAGES AND TASKS

Based on our experience, research and understanding of the principles of adult learning and program planning, we have developed an inclusive conceptual model that provides a practical framework in which the developer can work. There are four stages to the model: Preplanning, Planning, Delivery, and Follow-up. Each stage requires that we ask specific questions and recommends tasks to be completed. The principles of respect, collaboration, experience, action, and participation are integrated in each stage.

Preplanning

As the beginning point for effective faculty development, this stage focuses attention on organizational goals, needs and climate, as well as starting with the faculty and their needs and experience. The questions to be asked in this stage include: What is the purpose of faculty development? What is the purpose of this specific faculty development initiative? How is faculty development tied to the mission of the institution? And what resources are available to support a faculty development initiative at this time? Asking these questions aids the developer in a reflective process that includes scanning the environment and the social and political context in which the programs will take place. There are five tasks in the preplanning stage: understanding organizational culture, identifying the role of the faculty developer, assessing needs, evaluating resources and establishing goals. During this stage, the adult learning perspective means we must consider the faculty's needs for learning and change, not just what we or the institution perceives as important. Here is where an advisory committee of faculty for faculty development may be helpful, not only in understanding the institutions, but also in collecting information on faculty needs. This is also the time to have a clear idea of both financial, physical, and human resources.

Planning

While preplanning determined the overall direction of faculty development, the planning stage involves structured preparation for what specifically will happen during the program. Important questions to be addressed include what exactly is to happen, who will be involved and how will it all be organized. This planning stage is the time for both the faculty developer and the administration to build a positive climate in which the faculty will be strengthened and empowered. While much training is viewed as fixing something that is deficient, this model emphasizes a more positive approach by including the faculty in the entire process and valuing their input. There are six tasks for the planning stage and they include: selecting a topic, identifying a presenter, preparing for delivery, preparing for support and transfer of learning, scheduling the event and beginning the evaluation. Coming from a learned-centered perspective requires us to take into consideration the needs, interests, experiences and capabilities of the faculty who will be our potential participants. Building ownership increases motivation first to attend the event, and then to transfer the learning from the event to faculty work. Probably one of the most crucial tasks in the whole model is the selection of the presenter. Not only should the person be an expert in the content to be delivered, but the presenter should also understand the characteristics of the faculty participants and be able to present using appropriate and respectful instructional methods. If the faculty feel comfortable with the delivery of the program, then transfer of learning is apt to occur.

Delivery

Successful programs breed more successful programs. If faculty find that the program meets their needs, is tied to their reward systems, has meaning for their work, and is delivered in a professional and appropriate way, they are more likely to be positive towards faculty development and change. This is why preplanning and planning tasks are important to complete before the program actually is considered. The first question we must ask ourselves is this: Are we building on this preparation? Other questions include: How do we effectively promote the program? How are adult learning principles implemented? And how do we monitor the program? These questions delineate our tasks at this stage. First, in the rush to get things done we may lose sight of the overall goals, objectives and direction that were originally considered. Building on our preparation means utilizing all needs assessment, faculty input, and environmental scanning information. Other tasks at this stage include: promoting the program, implementing adult learning principles, and monitoring the program. Marketing programs on campus may require a different perspective. Timing of the materials, channels of communication, and clarity on goals and expectations are important. The opportunities available for the promotion of the program might well be a measure of the level of organizational support. When promoting the program, faculty should be made aware of how the program will be delivered. Will it be lecture, hands-on, experiential, and/or participatory? Here is the opportunity to integrate all the adult learning principles in the actual program. Both the content and process should be relevant for the faculty, emphasizing practical applications and connections to their work. Being aware of diverse learning styles, faculty discipline specific characteristics and faculty work constraints are important to this stage.

Follow-up

Many of us think we are done when the program ends. However, with faculty development we are continually striving for more effective programming to create of climate of professional development that goes beyond the traditional modes of sabbaticals and conferences. Support for changes in thinking and behavior, along with consideration of further development activities is important at this point. Here we ask the following questions: What is the evaluation plan? How will ongoing support be provided for what was learned? What can we, as faculty developers, gain from reflecting on our role in this endeavor? The adult learning principles inherent in this stage center on the goal of empowering the faculty in their work. If we build a climate of respect and provide opportunities for collaboration and participation we enhance the possibility that learning will take place. Implementing what is learned empowers faculty and helps them to make the changes necessary to advance in their professional roles. The tasks at this stage are evaluation, continued learning, and assessment of the faculty developer's role. We encourage developers to use more than one method of evaluation to get an overall picture of not only the feelings of the faculty regarding the event, but exactly what they have learned and how they can transfer that learning to their work. Analyzing the data and reflecting on what it means provides not only feed back on the program but begins the needs assessment process for the continuation of development activities within the institution. Learning does not end at the close of a seminar or workshop. Interest in the faculty's continued learning promotes a positive climate and promotes ownership and interest in future initiatives. Finally, we come to our role as a developer. Just as we ask the participants to reflect on the event and learning they attended, we too need to reflect on the entire process and the outcomes of our planning. Such reflective practice will enable the developer to offer ever-improving faculty development programs.

SUMMARY

The impact of adult learning, adult education, program development, and professional development principles upon informed practice can lead to programs that meet the changing needs of faculty and their institutions. The Adult Learning Model of Faculty Development provides an organized and strategic framework to focus faculty developers in the field from an adult learning perspective.

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LIVING AND LEARNING WITH HIV/AIDS: TRANSFORMATIONAL TALES CONTINUED

Lisa M. Baumgartner

ABSTRACT: The purpose of this study was to uncover the nature of learning during the incorporation of HIV/AIDS into one's identity over time. Specifically, it sought to understand participants' continued meaning-making of their chronic illness. This study was the third conducted with the same participants over the course of almost five years. Analysis revealed that the nature of learning was transformational. The perspective transformation remained stable over time. Meaning scheme changes were acted on and additional meaning scheme changes occurred. Social interaction was integral to the learning process. These findings have implications for adult education.

INTRODUCTION

Our learning continuously reshapes us. Dirkx (1998) writes, "The self . . . is a reflective, dialogical, expressive. . . [entity] that constructs and reconstructs itself through the experiences of learning" (p. 10). Erik Erikson, the developmental psychologist, notes that identity development is a lifelong process. We are constantly in the process of becoming and our learning drives our development.

Incorporating HIV/AIDS into one's identity over time involves learning. Because of new medications HIV/AIDS, once considered a plague, is now deemed a chronic disease in the U.S. (Beaudin & Chambre, 1996). An increasing number of HIV-positive people will be living longer. Previously, people needed to make sense of this terminal illness in their lives. Now individuals are grappling with how to live with the disease and make meaning of it. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to explore the nature of learning that occurred during the incorporation of HIV/AIDS into one's identity as well as the continued meaning-making HIV positive adults make of their disease over time.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study, which examines meaning-making in the lives of HIV-positive adults like its predecessors (Courtenay, Merriam, & Reeves, 1998; Courtenay, Merriam, Reeves, & Baumgartner, 2000), is grounded in Mezirow's (1991) transformational learning theory. This framework was chosen because Mezirow makes a clear connection between learning and development. In fact, Mezirow (1991) believes that learning *drives* development.

Mezirow's transformational learning theory, which is based on interviews with women who returned to college after an extended hiatus (Mezirow, 1981), is a constructivist theory which sees learning as "the process of using prior interpretation to construe a new or revised interpretation of the meaning of one's experience in order to guide future action" (Mezirow, 1991, p. 12). In other words, knowledge is created from interpretations and re-interpretations in light of new experiences (Mezirow, 1991). The revised meaning results from what Mezirow calls a "perspective transformation" which leads to a "more inclusive, discriminating, permeable and integrative perspective" (Mezirow, 1990, p. 14).

This change in worldview results from going through a process which begins with a "disorienting dilemma" which is a life experience that causes people to question their beliefs and assumptions (Mezirow, 1991, p. 168). Critical reflection is the lynchpin in the transformational learning process. Assumptions need to be questioned in order to arrive at the new perspective. A new perspective results from critical reflection on meaning schemes or meaning perspectives. People's meaning schemes are their beliefs, feelings and value judgments (Mezirow, 1991), their "habitual, implicit rules for interpreting [experience]" (p. 2, Mezirow, 1991, emphasis in the original). Third, people talk with others about their new perspective to obtain consensual validation. Last, people must act on the new perspective. In other words, *living* the new perspective is necessary.

Mezirow (1991) maintains that a perspective transformation is irreversible. A previous study with these participants confirms this (Courtenay, Merriam, Reeves, & Baumgartner, 2000). It was speculated, then, that the perspective transformation would continue to hold and that people would continue to make meaning of their disease. What was unknown was what new meaning would be made in light of new medications which continue to extend life. Further, Taylor (2000) calls for "new and varied. . . methods of data collection" (p. 319). This study is unique in that it follows the meaning-making of individuals with HIV/AIDS over a five year period.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND DATA COLLECTION

This study was the third conducted with the same participants. As with the previous two studies, a qualitative design was chosen because the researcher sought to understand the dynamic, continuously evolving process of meaning-making. In order to examine the meaning-making process of HIV-positive adults over time, data sets from the two previous studies on meaning making in 1995 and 1998 were used. A third round of interviews was conducted from October to December of 1999.

Eleven of the original 18 participants were interviewed (7 men and 4 women.) All the respondents, with the exception of one 61-year-old male, were between the ages of 31 and 49. Eight participants are Caucasian and four are African American. Participants' education level extended from high school graduate through master's degree.

Data was collected using semi-structured interviews that lasted between one and one-half and three hours. Interview questions focused on the nature of learning that occurred during the incorporation of HIV/AIDS into one's identity and how people continued to make sense of their disease in the past couple of years. Sample interview questions included: 1) What have you learned during the process of being HIV-positive? and 2) What sense have you made of the disease in the past couple of years? All interviews were tape recorded and transcribed.

Since a narrative framework was used, data was analyzed using three approaches to narrative analysis. Gee's (1990) sociolinguistic approach, McAdams's (1988) and Alexander's (1988) psychological methods of analysis, and Denzin's (1988) biographical methods were used to analyze the data. The 1999 interviews were analyzed in conjunction with interviews conducted with these eleven participants in 1995 and 1998. Comparisons within and between interviews were made and common patterns regarding the nature of learning and continued meaning making emerged.

FINDINGS

Four major findings emerged from the data. First, the learning was transformational and the perspective transformation remained stable over time. Second, meaning scheme changes discovered in 1998 were still evident in 1999. Third, there were two additional meaning scheme changes including an increased appreciation for the human condition and an expanded view of intimacy. The fourth major finding was that social interaction was found to be prominent factor in the transformational learning process.

Continued Stability of the Perspective Transformation

The stability of the perspective transformation was shown by participants' continued need to make a meaning contribution, their continued heightened sensitivity to life, and their continued need to be of service to others.

Opportunity to make a meaningful contribution. Seeing HIV/AIDS as an avenue to make a meaningful contribution instead of a curse was a cognitive change which was seen in the 1995 interviews and continued in subsequent interviews. Jamie's response was typical. In 1995, Jamie believed HIV/AIDS was "part of God's plan" for his life. In 1999, he continued to see his diagnosis as an opportunity to make a meaningful contribution. He said, "I've got a chance to do something for some people and I'd better take it. HIV gave me that opportunity that I may not have had in the same way otherwise."

A heightened sensitivity to life. A second indication of the new perspective participants gained and maintained was their continued heightened sensitivity to life. They had reflected on what was important in life and found that valuing people and appreciating each day was more important than status, money, and power. Joe's heightened sensitivity to life was evidenced by his increased faith in humanity in 1995. He stated, "I've seen emotional and psychological changes in people that I just would not have thought were possible. . . It's given me a lot of faith in humanity that people can change." In 1998, his thoughts turned to appreciation of nature. He remarked, "I walk outside and it's a beautiful day. . . I can actually have tears in my eyes because it's so beautiful." In 1999, Joe was grateful for friends and family. He particularly appreciated "real friends" whom he described as "the ones that will come over and bring you chicken soup when you have no one else to feed you."

A need to be of service to others. A third indicator of a new perspective was evident in individuals' continued need to be of service to others. Many became immersed in the HIV/AIDS community. Jeffery described eloquently his need to give back to others in 1995:

> I believe what a friend has described as a circle of giving and until you enter that circle it's hard for you to receive anything. And by giving you become one of the spokes. . . and you can't give more than you're getting back and that's been my experience in so many things in giving back.

When interviewed in 1998, Jeffery said, "I affirm the circle of giving. It's so true. Once you begin to give things away, it comes back and if you stop that then you become stagnant." In 1999, Jeffery's need to help others was coupled by a sense of responsibility. He said, "I have a sense of responsibility. To myself. . . If I sell my insurance and boarded a real nice ship and sailed around the world how [would] I have helped?"

The Stability of Previous Meaning Scheme Changes

In 1998, Courtenay, Merriam, Reeves, and Baumgartner (2000) investigated the stability of the perspective transformation and found that it remained stable. They also discovered three meaning scheme changes. The 1999 interviews revealed that these meaning scheme changes held and people had time to act on them.

Continued orientation toward the future. When interviewed in 1998, participants had a greater orientation toward the future than they had in 1995. New medications and improved health had many cautiously optimistic about the future. This view held in 1999. For example, Elise, who had complained that "there was not enough time" in 1995 and confessed she was more optimistic about the future in 1998 because of protease inhibitors, saw time stretching before her in 1999. The chronic status of her HIV-positive diagnosis almost seemed to bore her. She said, " I feel like I'm trudging. . . I'm tired of this. I'm so over it."

Continued attention to care of the self. A new meaning scheme that participants developed between 1995 and 1998 was greater attention to care of the self (Courtenay, Merriam, Reeves, & Baumgartner, 2000). In 1995, they had concentrated on serving others. By 1998, people spoke about finding a balance between caring for self and others.

This need for self-care continued in the 1999 interviews. For example, Tracy, who in 1998 admitted that she "didn't give her home phone number out as much [to people she sponsored in Narcotics Anonymous] said in 1999, "I have people in my life that know I'm positive but they're not positive so we don't have to be talking about all the medicines. It could be other things like bowling."

Continued incorporation of HIV/AIDS into identity. Continued integration of HIV/AIDS into a person's identity was evident by the manner in which people referred to the virus. In 1999, Jeffery noted that "the dragon didn't tower over [him] anymore." In 1998, Kenneth referred to HIV as "a pet." By 1999, the virus was so integrated that he did not name it as a separate entity. He noted, [HIV].. . . It's just part of what I do. It's like getting up and brushing your teeth in the morning. It's just part of my life."

Additional Changes in Meaning Schemes

In addition to acting on and broadening existing meaning schemes, the transcripts revealed additional meaning scheme changes. People demonstrated: (1) an increased appreciation for the human condition and (2) an expanded view of intimacy.

Increased appreciation for the human condition. People increasingly accepted their own and other's failings and frailty. Pat shared that she used to feel superior to others with HIV/AIDS because she lived a healthier lifestyle. She stated, "I used to [think] that I was better. . . but I don't do that anymore. I have to allow them to be where they are." Likewise, Sam, who had difficulty with churches that did not accept gays said, "I have to let those [churches] have their path even though it's painful for me."

Expanded view of intimacy. In 1998, Kenneth bragged, "I have no problem with women. . . Most of my female friends are not positive and are very much aware that I am." When last interviewed, Kenneth realized that intimacy was multi-layered. He explained, "There's a physical level, a mental level and a spiritual level and I grew beyond just the physical experience because an orgasm only lasts five seconds. . . I desire more than just the physical experience with an individual."

Social Interaction: The Influence of the Group

Mezirow (1991) alludes to the importance of social interaction in the transformational learning process. Social interaction transformed participants from frightened, stigmatized individuals to empowered, confident people. By talking with others, people realized they were not alone and that has a group they could change society.

Dawn credits interaction with others as a necessary part of her continued survival. She reported that the majority of long-term survivors are involved in groups and says, "Getting involved in the HIV community. . . is somewhat responsible for the reason I'm here." The group gave her "strength" and helped her "want to make a difference."

Joe spoke to the impact of the group on society. He said that organizing and being vocal, is imperative for survival. He said, "If we don't. . . lobby for drugs, if we don't make our voices heard, we are all going to die." Jeffery became much more politically active in the past two years. He was part of a group that lobbied the state legislature for the AIDS Drug Assistance Program. He said, "By the end of the session we got $1.2 million dollars."

Social transformation was integral to the transformational learning process. Mezirow's (1991) assertion that individual transformation can lead to social transformation is confirmed by this study. In addition, when people banned together to lobby for money for HIV/AIDS drugs, society was impacted.

IMPLICATIONS FOR ADULT EDUCATION THEORY AND PRACTICE

Regarding the nature of learning during the process of incorporation, this study provides empirical support that the learning is transformational and that the perspective transformation continues to remain stable. In addition, previous meaning schemes are acted upon and people continue to make meaning during the process of incorporation. Educators and counselors should be encouraged that people may eventually gain a broader, more inclusive view of the world as a result of grappling with the disease. They should also be aware that after people gain this new perspective, they continue to make sense of their disease. (Courtenay, Merriam, Reeves, & Baumgartner, 2000).

The stability of the perspective transformation over time should be both cause for celebration and caution among educators. Those instructors who facilitate transformational learning experiences in the classroom have empirical evidence that this learning experience holds (Courtenay, Merriam, Reeves, & Baumgartner, 2000). Challenging students' preconceived notions about themselves and the world is a worthy goal of educators. It is a goal, however, that requires educators to examine their ethics. What right does the educator have to plan for perspective transformation? (Courtenay, Merriam, Reeves, & Baumgartner, 2000).

Second, educators should be encouraged that meaning schemes continue to change. In addition, those who educate adults should note that people act on these meaning scheme changes and that action is part of the learning process. Educators should be encouraged to assist learners in acting on their new meaning schemes.

Third, the study found that social interaction was integral to the transformational learning process. This is not entirely surprising since Mezirow's (1991) concept of rational discourse involves examining the validity of new meaning schemes and perspectives in discussion with others. However, it is surprising how important social interaction was in the participants' learning process and how many needs were met. In a sense, the HIV/AIDS support group was a "full service" station for the integration of the new perspective. People realized that they were not alone on this transformational journey, found a place where they could engage in rational discourse, try on new roles, and gain confidence in the new role within the group.

Taylor (1998) notes that learning through relationships and the importance of such factors as support and friendship in the transformational learning process has not been directly addressed in Mezirow's (1991) theory. My study's findings certainly allude to the importance of relationships and acceptance in the transformational learning process.

Finally, Mezirow's (1991) assertion that individual transformation can lead to social transformation is suggested in this study. Initially participants experienced a perspective transformation that resulted in a strong need to help others. When participants joined social action groups, they acted on their new perspective and their collective actions helped others.

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GENDER DIFFERENCES IN DISTANCE EDUCATION AND TECHNOLOGY: FAMILIARITY, COMFORTABILITY, AND RECEPTIVITY IN THE HOTEL AND RESTAURANT INDUSTRY

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ABSTRACT: The study investigated gender differences in terms of familiarity, comfortablity, and receptivity to distance education through the Internet for employees of the hotel and restaurant industry. The goal was to assess accessibility to technology and attitudes toward distance education in an adult population that had not yet experienced using technology in college courses. The data show that men had slightly more access to computers and higher usage of the Internet. No significant differences were found between men and women with respect to comfortability or receptivity toward using technology for courses, though females were more likely to feel the need for instruction to use technology. There were only slight differences by gender in perceptions of the advantages and disadvantages of learning with technology. Men and women were similar in viewing convenience and access as positive attributes, but the majority of participants were concerned that social interaction might be lacking when technology is used for instruction.

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of the present study is to examine gender differences in terms of familiarity, comfortablity, and receptivity to computers and the Internet with respect to the factors associated with using technology in distance education for employees of the hotel and restaurant industry. The goal is to identify perceptions of men and women that could present challenges to delivering college-level learning via technology and influence the design and development of courses that utilize the Internet either partially or entirely in the instructional process. A major difference from previous research is that feedback in the current study is obtained from a population that had little or no experience with using the Internet in college courses. In contrast to most former research that has assessed attitudes of students toward technology while enrolled in classes, the objective here is to investigate the attitudes and beliefs of individuals prior to their exposure to educational technology. This is believed to be a critical distinction in researching the expansion of Internet-based education to non-traditional populations that may not be predisposed to seeking out new educational opportunities and innovative methods of teaching.

Gender factors can affect receptivity and accessibility to distance education via the Internet. The role of gender in distance learning is highlighted by May (1994) in her qualitative research on women's learning experiences in courses taught via home study and teleconference at Athabasca University. She states that the women she interviewed reported distance learning allowed them to participate in the educational arena because of location challenges and child rearing obligations; they liked the opportunity to study anywhere and anytime; the learning experience was different for women than for men - it was easier for a man because of a man's lack of familial responsibilities; learner self-determination and self-motivation are required; and although there were imperfections with communication technologies, they saw the opportunities distance learning provided. Cafferella and O'Donnell (as cited in Ross-Gordon, 1991) indicate that research needs to be conducted concerning "self-directed learning with adults who are non-white, non-male and/or non-middle class" (p.6). They continue by suggesting research questions that concern types of learning projects, sources of assistance for students in self-directed learning projects, and types of resources and formats used for self-directed learning. These gender issues continue to challenge the distance learning education of today. Bremmer (as cited in Matthews, 1999) states, "Distance learning primarily attracts women with children" (p. 60). In addition to life situation variables cited above, symbolic interaction theory suggests that the way men and women interact with their settings and tasks is dependent on past experiences, values, and the way we approach the world (Fidishun, 1996). Resistance to or apprehension in using computers could be a result of past experience. Fidishun (1996) also reviewed the problems of computer anxiety, or computerphobia, as constructs that women might encounter when the expectations for using technology conflict with their modes of interacting with machines and people.

The first task of the present study is to assess the sample's familiarity with technology. Familiarity is defined here to include accessibility to the Internet and email as well as usage of these tools. Two major attitudinal themes being investigated are comfortability and receptivity to technology in distance learning. The construct of comfortability is defined here as the feelings or beliefs that individuals express with respect to using technology in future learning situations. The theme of receptivity in this study includes a predisposition, or attitude, toward learning with technology, perhaps related to previous experience with technology. One major goal of the research is to assess the predispositions of individuals who have not experienced distance education or used the Internet in college courses. We will examine various dimensions of these attitudes and the willingness to participate in instruction delivered in whole or part through the Internet.

METHODOLOGY

A sample of employees in hotels and restaurants in Pennsylvania was solicited to participate in this study. Hoteliers who belonged to the Greater Pittsburgh Hotel Association and restaurant owners and operators who belonged to the Pennsylvania Restaurant Association were sent packets of questionnaires. This approach enabled the researchers to obtain a sample that would represent the population of employees in hotels and restaurants. The owners and operators were asked to distribute the questionnaires to their employees, who mailed their responses directly back to the researchers. Forty-four packets with ten questionnaires each were sent to members of the Greater Pittsburgh Hotel Association; 102 packets with five questionnaires in each were sent to the owner/operators members in all 17 regions of the Pennsylvania Restaurant Association. The potential pool consisted of 950 respondents from 146 establishments.

Seventy-six employees from 36 establishments (12 hotels, 22 restaurants, 2 unknown) returned the questionnaires. This response rate reflected 25% of the establishments that were asked to participate and 8% of the total number of potential individual respondents. Based on their job positions in the hotels or restaurants, the respondents were classified into three categories: top management (n=5); staff management (n= 45); and line employees (n=26). Sixty-five of the respondents were full-time employees and 11 were part-time employees. Thirty-three were employed by hotels and 41 by restaurants (two were not able to be classified) with men and women having the same average age. The average level of the males was slightly higher than that of the females but the difference was not significant.

Since one goal of the present study was to examine factors among individuals who had not yet enrolled in a distance learning course through technology, the first step was to identify who in the sample had previous experience with the Internet in education. The survey results revealed that one in five participants (18.4%) had some previous experience using the Internet while enrolled in a college course. This finding supported our approach of analyzing a sample that had little experience using technology in distance learning.

RESULTS

Familiarity (*usage and accessibility*)

In this sample, fewer women (71%) than men (85%) have access to a computer at home. A similar pattern occurs with access to email at home with 69% of women and 76% of men having access. However, there were no significant differences by gender in the number of times that email was used at home each week. Men (85%) were more likely than women (62%) to use the Internet. However, with respect to how they used the Internet, equal numbers of men and women reported using the Internet for business (38%) and nearly equal proportions for personal activities (69% of men and 65% of women).

In order to examine time constraints of adults when they are not working, participants were asked what time of day they would anticipate using for the Internet for a course. "After work" was the most common time indicated by both men (94%) and women (91%) in similar proportions. Forty-eight percent of the males and 38% of the females responded that "before work" was also a time that Internet usage was possible.

Comfortability (*beliefs regarding future use of educational technology*)

In addition to determining the comfort level with using the Internet in distance learning in general, the following questions were asked using a 5-point Likert-type scale to elicit their feelings about interacting with instructors at a distance.

- How comfortable would you be in using email to ask an instructor a question on academic material in a course?
- How comfortable would you be in using email to ask an instructor a question on academic advising?

- How important is tutorial support if you enrolled in a course through distance learning?
- How much instruction would you need on how to use the Internet before you enrolled in a distance learning course?

With 1 and 2 being negative, 3 being a neutral response, and 4 and 5 being positive, the data (see Table 1) indicate that there is no significant difference between men and women on the items assessing the comfort level in using the Internet to learn. Additionally, women are significantly more likely than men to feel that they need more instruction on how to use the Internet prior to enrolling in a distance learning course.

Table 1.
Gender Differences Comfortability with Technology in Distance Education

	Gender	N	Mean	STD	Sig.
Comfort with using internet in a college Course	Male	32	3.91	1.28	
	Female	39	3.44	1.52	n. s.
Comfort to use email to ask instructor a question on academic material	Male	32	4.19	1.09	
	Female	41	3.66	1.42	n. s.
Comfort to use email to ask instructor for advising	Male	32	4.13	1.07	
	Female	41	3.59	1.43	n. s.
Importance of tutorial support in distance learning	Male	33	4.09	.80	
	Female	41	3.95	1.05	n. s
Instruction needed to use Internet	Male	34	2.09	1.11	
	Female	40	3.15	1.46	p=.001

Receptivity (*predisposition with respect to learning with technology*)

Subjects were asked to indicate their level of agreement with the following statements:

- Students who take courses in front of an instructor obtain the best academic experience.
- Students who take courses at a distance through technology obtain the best academic experience.
- How important is "anywhere, anytime, anyplace" learning to you?

The results of responses based on a Likert-type scale with 1 and 2 indicated disagreement, 3 being a neutral response, and 4 and 5 indicating agreement, are shown in Table 2. We found no significant differences in gender among the items used to assess participants receptivity to technology in distance learning. Both men and women were slightly positive in stating that the traditional classroom experience is best and they were slightly negative in believing that technology in distance learning is the best way to learn. The sample was close to neutral in the attitude toward " anywhere, anytime, anyplace learning." Finally, only four participants (three male and one female) indicated that they were planning to enroll in a course through distance education within the forthcoming year.

Table 2.
Gender Differences in Receptivity to Technology in Distance Education

	Gender	N	Mean	STD	Sig.
In-class learning is best academic experience	Male	34	3.88	1.04	
	Female	41	3.85	1.04	n. s.
Course delivered at a distance through technology are best academic experience	Male	34	2.65	.73	
	Female	39	2.79	.80	n. s.
Importance of anywhere, anytime, anyplace learning	Male	34	3.53	.96	
	Female	41	3.73	1.12	n. s.

Several open-ended questions were asked of the participants to elicit further responses that would expand the understanding of the data gathered from the structured questions. For each question, participants' statements were grouped into themes for those who responded (Table 3). One open-ended question was asked of the sample with respect to the advantages of completing a college course through the Internet or other modes of delivery in distance education rather than sitting in a classroom. Sixty-eight percent of the males and 60% of the females indicated that convenience and access were an advantage over traditional learning methods. With respect to comfortability, 24% of the males and 19% of the females responded that learning at one's own pace was an advantage. Another dimension of comfortability was expressed in terms of a theme of individualism that included individualized study, less threatening environment when making mistakes, and fewer distractions that detract from one's learning. However, only nine percent of the males and seven percent of the females indicated these advantages.

An additional open-ended question queried participants' perceptions of the disadvantages of completing a college course using the Internet or other distance education methods. Seventy-one percent of the males and 55% of the females indicated that the lack of social interaction would be a potential disadvantage in using the Internet. No other category of responses was mentioned by more than two of the participants.

Participants were asked what would influence their enrollment in a course through the Internet or in a traditional classroom. Males were more likely to mention time as a factor while females responded more in terms of personal connection. There was no gender difference in stating place of instruction as a factor in considering one's choice in the delivery mode.

Table 3
Responses to Open-ended Questions

	Male	Female
Advantages of Using Technology:		
Convenience and access	68%	60%
Learning at own pace	24%	19%
Individualism	9%	7%
Disadvantages of Using Technology:		
Lack of social interaction	71%	55%
Factors in Preferred Mode of Learning:		
Time	44%	24%
Personal connection	18%	31%
Place	12%	14%

CONCLUSION

Most of the participants in this study have access to a computer at home and use the Internet. Males and females were similar in their use of the Internet for business and personal activities although men had slightly more access and were a bit more likely to use email and the Internet. Research previously cited in this paper has suggested that the needs of men and women could affect how people approach distance learning. But, of the eight items in the present study used to assess comfortability and receptivity toward distance learning through the Internet, only one question revealed a significant gender difference. Despite having similar views of using technology in learning, women were much more likely to believe that they needed further instruction on how to use the Internet as a tool in distance learning. This indicates the need to provide skill development for women to support their otherwise positive attitudes.

The men and women in this study were very similar in perceiving the advantages and disadvantages of learning through the Internet. Convenience, access, and leaning at one's own rate were perceived as advantages by both males and females to equal degrees. Interestingly, men were much more likely to be concerned about the possibility of loss of social interaction in distance education although a greater number of women mentioned the personal connection as an issue in modes of learning. In addition, more men responded that time was a factor in distance learning.

Implications from this study for educational planning and programming for adults in the hospitality industry are many and varied. Since there are few differences related to gender in familiarity, comfortability, and receptivity in distance education and technology, a program planner may ask the question, "Should I ignore the concept of gender differences when planning for courses delivered by technology to adult populations?" The answer to this question can be partially answered by highlighting those present findings that underscore respondents' viewpoints. For example, since males and females have comparable access to computers and email technology at home and use the Internet for business and personal activities, this allows planners of distance learning to make the assumption that the majority of adults will have a basic level of familiarity with technology. This assumption can provide a basis for moving from the correspondence course mode of delivery to courses delivered via technology.

While the participants recognize the convenience and time flexibility permitted by technology. The preference of both men and women to study after work must be addressed by the program planner. In the hospitality industry, where services are offered 24 hours a day, seven days a week, technology may be ideal in terms of access, but finding times in this type of population for on-line interactions may be a challenge. Finally, the "high-touch" needs of learners (expressed as social interaction by men and personal interaction by women) must be considered.

This study also underscores the importance of an instructor and on-line tutorial support in learning with technology. Program planners have to build these features into a course of study delivered through technology. Also, since the respondents, especially women, expressed a need for instruction prior to enrolling in a distance learning course, program planners can not assume that a basic familiarity with technology should infer that learners at a distance will be assimilated into a course without upfront coaching.

The constructs of comfortability and receptivity will also play heavily into how a distance learning course is marketed. For example, since learners view technology as the opportunity to learn at their own pace, to provide for individualized study, and to create a less threatening environment with fewer distractions, these concepts can be utilized in marketing distance learning. Since the respondents did not express a strong preference for technology in education versus the traditional classroom experience, planners need to consider that adults are not yet convinced of the advantages of technology when developing marketing materials and planning for initial academic instruction. The distance learning jargon of "anywhere, anytime, anyplace" still has not become a buy-in for potential distance learners. Program planners in higher education must continue to ask questions on marketing, operations, academic content, pedagogy, and quality control when appealing to populations unfamiliar with distance learning through technology.

This study suggests further investigation into the issues of marketing and pedagogy when encouraging a professional in hospitality management to enroll in a distance learning course. For example, what marketing issues encourage a professional in hospitality management to consider and to enroll in a course through distance learning? We need to examine the positive and negative issues that influence the prospective student's decision. How can the educational programming of the hospitality industry and individual establishments support the "high tech/high-touch" needs of learners? There needs to be an identification of the pedagogical practices in resident instruction that may be absent in the delivery of distance learning courses so that the latter can be developed to assure social interaction.

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Refereed Papers

USING QUALITATIVE CASE STUDY TO EVALUATE A PRE-EMPLOYMENT TRAINING PROGRAM FOR ADULTS

Susan C. Biro

ABSTRACT: Qualitative case study is used to describe the experience of four adults in a pre-employment training program. Areas to investigate include what makes education meaningful, identifying barriers to learning, and determining if common andragogical theory is relevant to this population. Primary data comes from one-on-one interviews with women before, during, and after their training. It was found that cooperative learning activities were appropriate and helpful to students. The role of a mentor was also valuable. The strong impression that cooperative learning had on the adults affirms the decision of the program planner and adult educator to incorporate as many such experiences as possible.

ISSUES TO BE INVESTIGATED

I wanted to determine if what I have learned about adult learning theory and practice was being used to serve adults who were transitioning from unemployment or part-time work to full-time employment (Bee, 1996; Brookfield, 1987; Halpern & Associates, 1994; Lawler, 1991). It was important to investigate if the concept of andragogy popularized by Malcolm Knowles—the "art and science of helping adults learn" (Jarvis, 1995, p. 90)—could be applied to a group of adults who are female and African-American.

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

This literature review will explore the uneasy connection between societal norms about family structure, moral judgments placed on the unemployed, and the myths and facts of reform (Handler, 1995; Gueron & Pauly, 1991; Rose, 1995). The role of cooperative learning and what it adds to the learning experience will be discussed (Adams & Hamm, 1990; Angelo, 1998, Foyle, 1995; Sharan, 1990; Slavin, 1990; Sutherland & Bonwell, 1996), as will the framework of Afrocentric psychology and how it is a worthwhile expansion on the concept of adult learning (Bee, 1996; Jarvis, 1995; Pack-Brown, Whittington-Clark, & Parker, 1998).

History of Helping

Policies and categories. In the U.S., welfare reform policies have reflected conflicting themes—a desire to help the truly needy vs. a need not to attract the able-bodied to public assistance, and the assumption that jobs existed for everyone who wanted them. The moral context around the establishment of Aid to Dependent Children (ADC) programs in 1911 was important because the myth was that poor mothers could stay at home and care for children. The reality was that only a few white widows were helped and most poor mothers and their children were denied aid.

One State's Attempt at Helping

Career Exploration Program, Inc. In existence for 25 years, Career Exploration Program, Inc. (CEP) is located in Wilmington, Delaware. CEP serves three adult populations: those who are unemployed and seeking fulltime work; those transitioning from welfare to work as mandated by law; and seniors who wish to return to the workforce. Adults who are interested complete an application, undergo an intake interview, background check, drug test, and initial assessment of reading and math skills. Those who complete this intake are enrolled in a 2-week pre-employment training program. Each class enrolls 10 to 18 adults. Approximately 110 adults participate annually as a result of CEP's contract with the Delaware Department of Labor.

Barriers to Learning

Among the barriers identified by various agencies for adults transitioning from unemployment to work are transportation and child care. Regarding the former, agencies in Delaware have worked together to offer three-months' worth of free passes for the state's bus system; provide vouchers and extended availability of a taxi service; and contract with shuttle providers to provide transportation when buses or taxis are not operating. Child care is a more nebulous hurdle and some job readiness sites have child care available, but this will present an ongoing challenge for women, in particular.

Women In Transition

Afrocentric perspective for women. As more women overall, but minority women in particular, participate in greater numbers in education and training programs, it is imperative that educators have experience in multicultural issues. A basic foundation in andragogy seems the place to begin, yet relying solely on theories developed by those who are mostly white, male, and European may not suit African-American women particularly well. Pack-Brown et al (1988) base their guidelines for performing successful group work with African-American women on Afrocentric psychology, which emerged from a need to develop philosophical constructs other than those of a European-American culture. Educators who want success in a classroom setting with African-American women should remember the qualities that help members grow and change—hope, the notion of universality (i.e., commonality), altruism, existential factors (to face the tough times), and group cohesion.

Andragogy

Malcolm Knowles has received much credit for popularizing the concept of andragogy in adult learning and in differentiating it from pedagogy. Knowles asserts that there are several assumptions one can make about adult learners, including the assumption that adults need to be self-directed learners, they accumulate expansive life experiences, they are ready to learn, and they tend to be problem-centered learners (Jarvis, 1995; Knowles, 1989).

Cooperative Learning

Cooperation and collaboration. Cooperative learning is seen as helping students examine their own socialization process as they learn to balance reason, individualism, and community (Adams & Hamm, 1990). Educators place a higher value on the processes of thinking, learning, and questioning in today's changing world because students are seen as global citizens (Halpern & Associates, 1994). Cooperative learning engages students in active rather than passive learning because "it is a social method. It involves students working together as equals to accomplish something of importance to all" (Slavin, 1990, p. 34). Other benefits of cooperative learning—sharing responsibility, performing peer tutoring, and coaching and supporting one another—help adults become active learners (Monahan & Hinson, 1988).

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT

Merriam (1988) notes that qualitative research "assumes that there are multiple realities—that the world is not an objective thing . . . but a function of personal interaction and perception" (p. 17). Other strengths of case study research include its foundation in real-life situations and the opportunity to expand a reader's experiences. Limitations of case study research include oversimplification or exaggeration, leading to an incorrect conclusion (Merriam, 1988). Investigators are reminded that the results of case study are really a *part* of the whole experience.

Specific Procedures and Timeline

Initial visit. Arrangements were made with CEP to allow me access to the class that began training July 31, 2000. There were a total of 12 students; 11 were female, and 1 was male. Ten students were African-American; one was White, and one was Hispanic.

First and second interviews. My second visit to the class occurred two days later, on Friday, August 11, and resulted in the first interview being completed. I interviewed all four students at this visit. The second interviews occurred on Friday, August 30, at the nursing home where the students were completing their four-week clinical training.

Third interviews. The third and final interview occurred on Friday, September 29, at the nursing home. I completed the third interview with Chinyere on September 29. She was the only student with whom I was able to conduct all three interviews face-to-face.

Research Sample Demographics

The women interviewed in this multi-site study had been accepted into the next class undergoing pre-employment training, which was to be followed by clinical training as certified nursing assistants (CNAs). Three of the women interviewed were African-American; one was White. Their ages were 21, 23, 29, and 39. Two of the women were single mothers; one was married and had stepchildren; the marital status and parental role of the fourth was unknown. Three women had their own transportation and one utilized public transportation.

Instrumentation

All of the interviews were tape-recorded, with each student granting verbal permission. I also took notes during the interviews in order to provide references to the tapes during transcription. The interviews were semi-structured.

DATA COLLECTION

First Interview

Goals, expectations, challenges. The first interview occurred on Friday, August 4, at CEP. All four women were actively seeking full-time employment when they learned about the certified nursing assistant (CNA) program at CEP. All indicated a desire to work in the nursing field and each named specific family members or friends who worked in the nursing field and were viewed as role models.

In the first interview, all women stated that their goals included finishing the clinical training and passing the state CNA examination. Two students indicated that their goals included becoming registered nurses. When asked where they would like to be 3 years from now, everyone said they hoped to still be working at the nursing home.

Second Interview

Issues to be explored. The second interviews with Chinyere and Aisha occurred August 30, 2000, at a nursing home. The students had started their clinical training August 14. Latosha had to drop out of the program because her father passed away and she would miss too much time. The fourth student, Carol, had been assigned to another nursing home.

Self-assessment of learning. Both Aisha and Chinyere had positive things to say about their learning experiences at CEP. Both indicated that small group work and the Survival Skills series were most helpful. Aisha, who had previous college experience, felt the content of the CEP program was too basic for her but said she valued the interaction and small group work.

When asked to describe how they learn best, both women said they speak up and ask questions when they do not understand something, so they participate in their learning. Both noted the value of hands-on learning and taking notes. During their training, each student was assigned a mentor. The mentor was a fulltime CNA who provided support, answered questions, corrected them as needed, and helped them acclimate to the work environment. Both had positive things to say about their mentors.

Third Interview

How learning occurred. The third interview with Chinyere occurred Friday, September 29 at the nursing home. Restating a theme from the second interview, Chinyere said learning happened for her by a combination of small group work, interacting with peers and teachers, and by hands-on experiences. According to Chinyere, this was different from her learning experiences in

Nigeria where the instructor would lecture to students, offer no opportunity for questions or interaction, and offer very little, if any, hands-on experiences.

Self-reflection. It became clear that Chinyere approached learning in a direct manner that was different from her culture and previous educational experiences. Chinyere commented that in Nigeria, teachers only lectured to students and wrote on the board. There was never opportunity for interaction with fellow students, reinforcing a hesitancy to ask questions. However, in a new environment, Chinyere seemed to approach learning differently. In her words:

> I made up my mind the only way I can survive is to ask questions. When I was in my country, I found out I wasn't asking a lot of questions . . . sometimes you might feel like, in my country, that your classmates might laugh at you. But I came here and I didn't know anybody and I wanted to ask questions and I didn't care [if they laughed] (personal communication, September 29, 2000).

Final interview with Aisha

When I called to confirm our meeting, Aisha told me that she no longer worked at the nursing home and her last day had been Friday, September 29. During our conversation October 5, Aisha said she felt the nursing home was short-staffed and too much work was expected too soon. Aisha said her clinical training was good and thorough, and she noted that a "very good component" was a mentor (personal communication, October 5, 2000).

SUMMARY OF DATA COLLECTION

During a nine-week period, I interviewed four women in a pre-employment training program and a four-week clinical training program. At each stage, I interviewed fewer students. At the first interview, all four women participated; at the second interview, two participated; and at the third interview, only one participated as planned, while another participated via telephone. Although the amount of data collected diminished over time, the quality of the data increased because the women shared thoughtful and reflective answers.

SUMMARY OF RESEARCH

Cooperative learning activities facilitated learning by creating a peer support system, fostering a sense of teamwork, and allowing meaningful interactions to occur. Common to the concept of andragogy, these adults were problem-centered in learning, brought vast life experience to the classroom, and were self-directed learners. An understanding of Afrocentric philosophy might enhance learning for these adults, who were mostly female and African-American.

Observations

Collaboration, confidence. Student responses affirmed that small group activities instilled confidence in their classwork and among their peers, while affording them time to interact with one another or the instructor.

Student goals. When comparing the goals of the women from the first to the final conversation, it was evident that most did not succeed as intended. For example, in the first interview, all four stated the dual goal of finishing clinical training and passing the state CNA exam. Nine weeks later, only 2 of the 4 had completed the clinical training. Of these women, only 1 would remain eligible to take the state exam.

Barriers. These include transportation, classroom supplies, work uniforms, examination fees, and childcare. However, the barriers identified by the women were not the same ones I identified. The barriers identified by students included language and completing further education. When asked what challenges they faced, the women spoke in terms of wanting endurance to complete the training, to pass the state exam, and to gain confidence in the classroom among their peers.

Questions Raised

Some of the questions raised at the completion of the interviews include why did only one student make it through this entire training process and maintain fulltime employment? What might have made the difference for a student like Aisha who completed all the training, yet quit her fulltime job 1 week later? Would the role of a mentor at CEP have made a difference earller in the educational experience?

RECOMMENDATIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

A CEP administrator noted that in each new class of students there was a dropout rate of 1 to 3. The common reasons for dropout were failure to pass the background check or drug test. The two students who dropped out in this study did so for reasons not related to the background check or drug test, yet it was not possible to know if a follow-up action might have resulted in either completing training. This might be a role fulfilled by a mentor. Realizing that funding might not allow for mentors, it would be valuable to explore how a peer support system could be developed during the first week, when commitment to stay in the program seems most tenuous.

Further Research

Additional research that helped uncover what kinds of support systems the students have (i.e., spouse, family, friends) would be valuable as would follow-up with adults who did not complete the program to determine the reasons for dropout and make adjustments. A concentrated effort at a retention program that combined paper tracking and phone calls with real-life mentors and peer support systems could positively impact the commitment of adult learners to this program.

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Refereed Papers

ASSESSING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF A FAITH-BASED LEARNING ENVIRONMENT FOR ADULTS: A CASE STUDY AND COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

Anthony L. Blair

ABSTRACT: This study addresses the integration of faith and context, rather than content, in the adult professional studies programs at faith-based institutions. Data analysis revealed that students in one such program have a higher opinion of that institution's behavior--in terms of support, assistance, learning environment, and even quality of education--than that of other institutions. Students attribute this behavior to the institution's faith commitment. Further, the data indicate that similar faith-based institutions are also perceived more positively. However, it appears that the integration of faith and behavior at these colleges and universities is largely unintentional. This integration is a reflection of the personal values and behavior of the faculty and staff, but it is not necessarily a reflection of an institutional commitment to a holistic approach to student service.

INTRODUCTION

> A revolution . . . has been slowly unfolding during the past several decades transforming the landscape of higher education, not only here in the United States but also throughout the world. This transformation in education is often referred to as the "Adult Student Revolution." Sparked by social, cultural, economic and technological factors, this sea-change is rightly called a "revolution" since it is causing astute educators, like scientists undergoing a paradigm shift, to assume pioneering attitudes and adopt unprecedented methods which the influx of adult students onto college campuses demands. (Naugle, 1995, pp. 24-25)

Faith-based institutions, particularly evangelical Christian colleges, have responded to this trend more quickly than many others. This is doubtless due to both practical and ideological motives. Practically speaking, faith-based universities do not usually have either the endowment funds or public investments that other, secular institutions enjoy, and adult professional programs have proven themselves effective profit centers for such financially strapped institutions. In an ideological sense, institutions that perceive their objectives within a comprehensive, religious mission to redeem humanity are perhaps more likely than others to seek a broader audience for their educational services.

Yet these programs have often been grafted onto an existing infrastructure without thoughtful reflection on how they will reflect the core values of the institution. Faith-based colleges struggle--and even wrangle, at times obsessively--over issues of mission and values, for the delineation of these values provides the justification for the institution's mere existence. If they are to provide an alternative context, or even alternative content, they must carefully distinguish their uniqueness. Most faith-based universities have employed a metaphor--"the integration of faith and learning"--or some variant on that theme as the means by which they will identify their unique mission.

REVIEW OF RELEVANT LITERATURE

One is expected in these institutions to articulate how one's faith informs one's discipline. In its simplest form, faculty members are encouraged to engage in that medieval debate between Anselm and Aquinas about whether one believes in order to know or knows in order to believe. In its more advanced form, one is challenged to reflect deeply on the interaction between epistemologies of revelation and reason, between the content of one's faith and of one's discipline, and between the presuppositions inherent in conflicting world views. It is a useful endeavor, even if there is increasing frustration over whether the metaphor employed provides the most useful framework for the task (Long, 1993; Migliazzo, 1993).

Regardless of whether one employs the integration metaphor or some other phraseology, the application of principles of faith to the educational task has been discussed primarily as an issue of content, not one of context or behavior. The literature among Christian scholars is full of intense discussions about how one's faith is modeled in the classroom or how one's understanding of a discipline is informed by one's faith convictions. This debate is particularly true of the journal, *Faculty Dialogue*, which is employed liberally in this paper. To use just one example, Naugle (1995), whose description of the adult student revolution opens this essay, pleads for "graduates who have been exposed to and influenced by an educational philosophy and curriculum rooted in the Christian world view" (p. 32). However, Naugle, like most others who have written on the subject, did not address how an institution's faith commitment should influence interactions with students outside of the classroom--in faculty-student relationships, in business transactions, in student services, in the integrity of the institution as a whole. When this arena is discussed, it is primarily within the context of the residential component of the traditional college experience, i.e. faith is lived out within the walls of the dormitory or is expressed through the events, activities, and service projects of the student body. For example, a chapter titled "Life Outside the Classroom" in Ernest Boyer's seminal work, *College: The Undergraduate Experience in America* (1987), solely concerns life in a residential community of traditional-aged students. Nonresidential programs, much less satellite campuses, are absent from this discussion.

But adult programs are almost universally non-residential. As Anthony Diekema, former president of Calvin College, noted in 1992, Christian institutions need to do a "better job of 'nurturing' students once on campus if the goal of expanding academic excellence is to realized" (p. 117). This includes a comprehensive infrastructure of support services that include and transcend counseling and advising. Yet, as Diekema (1992, p.118) observes, "Such a support system may be difficult, especially for commuter campuses." This is very true. How well, then, do faith-based institutions of higher education express their values, ethics, and faith to non-residential, adult students, separate from the content of the course instruction?

Some have responded to this question, at least on a tentative basis. For instance, Ludington (1991) presents a cogent argument for the value of ethics-based business programs in church-related colleges since these institutions, at least in theory, should provide a stronger ethical foundation for such programs simply because of their religious nature. Ludington challenges faith-based institutions to be more intentional in their ethical components, noting that students' attitudes or ethics on church-related campuses are not much different than those on non-religious campuses. This is a relevant issue for adult professional programs since business or management courses constitute the backbone of most. He calls for not only an ethics-laden curriculum, but also for a code of conduct that requires personal integrity and faith-based ethical behavior from everyone in the institution, from the president to the registrar, not just the faculty. This approach, however, is inadequate, for it addresses the issue of behavior solely from the perspective of the individual employee, not from the perspective of institutional policies or expectations.

Cox (1996) offers a new metaphor for understanding the faith-based institution's responsibility to model behavior that reflects one's values. He asserts that the primary objective of Christian higher education is not to teach, but to love students. "Love. . . . not intellectual attainments, should have ascendancy in higher education . . . Those goals of higher education that seem so desirable to pursue must always emanate from being rightly related first to God and then to one another" (pp. 3-4). Loving actions from the institution to the students consist, then, primarily of those that provide emotional healing for wounded psyches. While Cox assumes a false dichotomy by arguing the primacy of love over "an information or cultural transmission/improvement role" (an inadequate rendering of even the traditional educational mission), he is correct to remind us of the centrality of love to the Christian faith--and of the necessity to care for the spirit as well as the mind and body.

This holistic perspective is often given credence in Christian institutions, at least verbally (see DeWitt, 1993). Yet it is often countermanded by over specialization of tasks. If one individual treats the spirit, another the mind, and a third the body, each of those individuals may perform one's task diligently and ethically but without a coherent motivation to serve the object of their efforts as a whole person. The institution thus treats the student as Platonic dyad or triad, an approach that is neither Christian nor humanist.

If, on the other hand, faith-based institutions commit themselves to loving their students in a holistic sense, both by integrating their faith into the content of the curriculum and by expressing their faith with their behavior, what impact would this have on students' perceptions of the institution, on the quality of the learning environment, and (an important practical concern) on student retention? Several studies have examined this topic, although usually among traditional-aged students. For instance, Endo and Harpel (1981) concluded that faculty-student interaction that was regarded as "friendly" had a positive impact on overall student satisfaction with the college experience. This study was performed among freshmen at a major state university. Lamport (1994) investigated faculty-student interaction in a Christian college setting and concluded that "students attributed informal interaction with faculty as a positive influence on personal growth, intellectual growth, career goals, and educational aspirations" (p. 73).

Phillips (1998) went beyond student-faculty interactions to study the broader context of customer service. While his results were inconclusive as to the relationship between customer service and student retention, he did observe that "customer service is a term that is still not well understood nor appreciated in the higher education arena. Written comments on several surveys indicated that respondent presidents and chancellors did not believe that customer service was a relevant area of study within higher education" (p. 78). It must be noted that this study was conducted among faith-based institutions, the leaders of most of which encourage the expression of faith in the classroom but some of which, apparently, place little value on the expression of faith in one's interactions with students outside of the classroom. However faculty must give attention to this component as well, particularly for adult students who "are more vocal than traditional students might be about such program features as personal attention and frequent opportunity for involvement in the academic process" (Boiven & Cherem, 1994).

The literature, then, reveals two areas in which faith-based institutions have not always concentrated their best efforts. The first is the integration of faith not only into content but also into context, defined as the behaviors, values, interactions, and ethics of the institution. When this integration has happened, it has been primarily within the residential component of a traditional learning environment. The second area, is a subset of the first: the unique context of the adult, non-residential program. The research conducted for this essay addresses that unique perspective.

DATA RESULTS

For data collection purposes, the researcher utilized the adult professional studies program in which he is employed as a full-time faculty member. The institution is a Christian liberal arts college of approximately 2500 students located in the suburbs of Philadelphia. The college offered the first adult degree completion program in the Philadelphia area in 1989 and has since expanded its accelerated adult programs to include several undergraduate majors and two master's level offerings. Current enrollment, which fluctuates almost weekly because of the rolling nature of class starts, is approximately 500 students, almost all of whom have attended other institutions of higher education prior to their enrollment in this program. They are thus able to compare, from personal experience, learning environments in more than one institution.

Of these, a sample of 119 undergraduate (65%) and graduate (35%) students were surveyed with a written questionnaire. They were asked six demographic questions and eight questions that sought comparative data. These questions addressed the following issues: 1) academic assistance given to students outside the classroom; 2) personal assistance given to students outside the classroom; 3) respect and support shown to students by instructors inside the classroom; 4) respect and support shown to students by other students; 5) respect for diversity and toleration of other viewpoints; 6) ethics of the institution; 7) overall learning environment; and 8) quality of education. Three final questions were focused on the subject institution itself rather than on a comparison with other institutions.

Participants were volunteers and were neither identified nor identifiable. They were drawn from classes in both the Philadelphia area and in central Pennsylvania, although the location of the respondents was neither requested nor tabulated. Together, they represented experiences in sixty-one institutions of higher learning, thirty-seven of which were Pennsylvania colleges, universities, or accredited business schools.

It was hoped that the majority of students had previously attended colleges or universities with no particular faith or church affiliation, so the effects, if any, of a faith-based environment would be evident. A guiding assumption was that faith-based institutions would perform better than non-faith-based institutions on the quality of the learning environment, simply because of this philosophical commitment to holistic service. Therefore, it was important to determine if the subject institution was truly representative of faith-based institutions in general, or whether the survey results were applicable solely to this one institution. Eleven percent of the respondents had previously attended a college or university that the student identified as "faith-based" and 5% had attended a college or university identified by the student as "church-based, but not explicitly so."

Their responses were compared with those of the entire sample to determine if there were significant variations. Indeed, on all but one of the comparative questions, those who had previously attended a "faith-based" institution found their current experience to be better by only about two-tenths of one point on a Likert scale of one to five. This indicates that their experience at the subject institution was, for the most part, comparable to their experience at other faith-based institutions. Ironically, those who had attended "church-based institutions" routinely rated the subject institution much more favorably than did the sample as a whole, indicting a prior experience more negative than average. However, they represented too small a portion of the sample to provide statistically valid results.

One the whole, however, respondents compared the subject institution somewhat favorably to their previous experience, averaging (for the eight comparative questions) a score of 2.1 on a Likert scale in which 1.0 represented "much better," 3.0 represented "about the same" and 5.0 represented "much worse." The results from these eight comparative questions are displayed on Table 1, below.

Table 1.
Mean Scores of Comparative Questions

Academic Assistance Outside Classroom	2.3
Personal Assistance Outside Classroom	2.2
Respect and Support By Instructors	2.0
Respect and Support By Students	1.8
Respect for Diversity and Toleration of Viewpoints	2.2
Ethics of the Institution	2.3
Overall Learning Environment	2.1
Quality of the Education	2.1

Ironically, the component that was rated most favorably--respect shown to students by other students--is the one over which the institution has the least degree of control. One area over which the institution has considerable control, and which was assumed to be one of a faith-based institution's greatest strengths, was "ethics of the institution." While respondents did compare the ethics of the subject institution favorably with those of other institutions, this factor was unexpectedly rated quite low by the respondents. Yet, 66% of respondents indicated that "ethics of the instructors and staff" was an area in which the institution's faith commitment was most evident. Only "respect for students as adults" rated higher on a list of eight attributes. The somewhat contradictory responses on the issue of ethics may reflect a dichotomy between the personal ethics of the college's employees, which are viewed as exemplary, and the institutional ethics of the college as a whole, which are viewed less favorably.

The researcher was also pleased to see that "respect for diversity and toleration of other viewpoints" was compared favorably to other institutions, including public or private, secular colleges and universities. Sometimes a perception exists that a faith-based education is, by definition, intolerant of any viewpoint but that proscribed by its religious precepts. Advocates of faith-based higher education typically respond that the absence of a religious perspective in many secular institutions reflects an even greater intolerance. In any case, the respondents in this study, many of whom do not share the subject institution's faith commitment, indicate that diversity and toleration are very evident within its academic environment.

The general results, then, were fairly positive in favor of the subject institution. However, the researcher was concerned that this positive comparison not merely be a reflection of institutional bias on the part of the students loyal to their current school. Therefore, he sought to eliminate one source of bias--fading memories with the passage of time--by comparing results from students who had attended another institution within the past three years with those who had attended within ten years and those whose last educational experience was more than ten years prior. If such a bias were present, students whose experience was more dated would have rated the subject institution differently than those whose experience was more recent. The cross-tabulation, however, revealed that newer students rated the subject institutions better on only one factor--"quality of education." Otherwise, there were no significant statistical differences due to the length of time since their prior educational experience.

As the literature indicates, when colleges do prioritize issues of personal support of students, they typically do so with a focus on the residential environment. Therefore, it was assumed that those respondents whose previous educational experience had been primarily residential would compare the nonresidential adult program of the subject institution less favorably. Interestingly, 82% of respondents were commuter students at their most previous college. The remainder either lived on campus or lived off-campus but participated actively in campus activities. While the results of the two groups were, on the whole, favorable, there was a marked difference in their perceptions of the academic assistance given to students outside of the classroom. Those with residential experience scored this factor at 2.8 on the Likert scale, which means that this factor was substantially similar to their previous experience, while those without that previous residential experience scored a 2.3. This indicates that the nonresidential aspect of the adult program is notably poorer in terms of academic assistance, according to students.

The study also sought to determine if graduate students had a different perspective than undergraduate students, particularly in the area of classroom dynamics, where the most significant difference between undergraduate and graduate studies exists. The results indicated no statistically significant difference between the responses of the two groups, indicating that both groups are experiencing roughly the same environment.

RECOMMENDATIONS

This study has concluded that students in one particular faith-based adult professional studies program have a higher opinion of that institution's behavior--in terms of support, assistance, learning environment, and even quality of education--than that of other institutions. It also concluded that students attribute this behavior to the institution's faith commitment. The data have also suggested that this observation may be true of other faith-based programs. Yet the results also indicate some room for improvement, as the mean rating was "somewhat better," rather than "much better." This is particularly true for academic assistance outside the classroom. These ratings probably reflect the observation that the integration of faith and behavior at this and similar institutions is largely unintentional; it is a reflection of the personal values and behavior of the faculty and staff, most of whom take their faith seriously, but is not necessarily a reflection of an institutional commitment to a holistic approach to student service.

Can non-faith-based institutions profit from this data as well? Regardless of one's ideological commitment, most people share a holistic understanding of the human person. If adult students are valued for more than their tuition and more than their classroom achievements, if they are regarded as mature individuals worthy of respect, support, and honest interactions, then any institution can improve not only the quality of the learning environment, but also the quality of the education it offers.

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Refereed Papers

EVALUATING THE VALUE OF INTERNSHIPS FOR ADULT LEARNERS

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ABSTRACT: The benefits of experiential learning are accepted as a given in adult education. This study investigated the benefits of experiential learning for adult learners engaged in an internship as part of a masters degree program. Twenty-two students were interviewed regarding the benefits of the internship. They reported an increased connection between academic courses and the internship, learning new material on the internship, engaging in self learning, finding career opportunities, and developing a better perspective on the graduate program as a whole as a result of the internship.

INTRODUCTION

The role of experience in learning has become a basic tenant in adult education. In fact, the idea is so pervasive that Knowles (1980) made the role of learner's experience a cornerstone of his assumptions of andragogy. Dewey (1938) has provided the seminal work on experience in education. Here he traces the dual nature of experience noting that the learner possesses experience which influences the learning process and that learning itself constitutes an "experience" to which different learners react differently. Kolb (1984) refines these thoughts culminating in his definition of learning: "learning is the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience" (p. 38). This idea has been given new meaning by Mezirow (1991) and others through the exploration of transformative learning.

Indeed, the role of experience in learning has becomes such an axiom in adult education that a whole body of literature has been created showing how to maximize learning based on the learner's experience. Books on teaching methods (for example, Seaman and Fellenz, 1989; Galbraith, 1990) make much of the role of learners experience. Also, works on instructional design in adult education (for example, Dean, 1994) have emphasized the role of experience in the preparation of as well as the implementation of learning for adults.

The use of internships in higher education is an area in which the role of experience of the adult learner becomes paramount in considering the learning process. The question becomes twofold: does the internship offer the adult learner an enhanced learning opportunity and what role does the adult learner's experience play in determining the value of an internship for that learner? Much of the evaluation research on internships, such as that conducted by Yeoman, Palni, and McKee (1998) focuses on program outcomes. Other research focuses on evaluation of the learners by faculty or site supervisors such as the study by Giannetti, Radecki-Bush, Hansen, and Bush (1998) in which clinical psychology students were assessed for skill acquisition. Few studies were identified that expressly studied student evaluations of the internship experience.

One such study conducted by Schinbach and Kephart (1997) showed that students do value internships but did not identify specific student perceived benefits. In summary, little systematic evidence exists that identifies specific learning outcomes from an internship for adult learners in higher education.

In 1995 a new graduate program which combined courses in adult education and communications technology was begun. An internship was incorporated as an integral part of the curriculum. An on going evaluation of the internship experience has ensued to answer the following questions: To what extent do adult students consider internships a valuable part of the curriculum? What do the students perceive that they learn from the internship experience? and To what extent do students perceive that their learning during the internship contributes to the overall goals of the program?

It is often taken for granted that internships form a viable part of a students' education. On the other hand, the lack of control by faculty of the day-to-day experiences of an internship elicit skepticism on the part of some observers. Detailed analysis of student's perceptions of the benefits of internships will help reduce skepticism as well as provide systematic data to validate internships as a viable part of the curriculum. In a larger context, the findings from this study will contribute to the discussion regarding the value of experiential learning in adult education.

METHODOLOGY

The program in which this study is based is a masters level program consisting of 36 semester hours for the non-thesis option and 33 semester hours for the thesis option. Students in either option can register for an internship of 3 or 6 semester hours. Students in the graduate program were contacted for in-depth interviews upon completion of their internships. A total of 22 interviews were conducted out of the 28 students s who had completed internships through the end of fall, 2000 (78.6%). Each student was asked to respond to questions in five areas: 1) What is the relevance of the academic classes in the program to your internship? 2) What new learning has occurred for you during the internship? 3) What have you learned about yourself as a result of the internship? 4) What career opportunities (if any) have resulted from the internship? 5) How has the internship experience affected your perception of the graduate program as a whole? The first question was analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Questions 2 through 5 were narrative and the data were analyzed using content analysis.

FINDINGS

The internships began in the summer of 1998 and continue through the summer of 2000. Seven of the students completed internships for Pennsylvania Department of Education Certification as Instructional Technology Specialist and 15 were non-certification internships. Seventeen of the student interns were employed at the time they completed the internship requirement while 5 were not otherwise employed. The average age of the student interns was 31.33 (SD = 8.22) with a range from 22 to 49 years of age.

Relevance of Academic Courses to the Internship

Students were asked to rate the topics of each course in the program to their internship experience on a scale of 0 to 4 with 0 = not at all important, 1 = not very important, 2 = somewhat important, 3 = important, and 4 = extremely important. Each course was divided into a number of topics based on the syllabus used in the courses. The ratings for each topic in a course were averaged to derive an overall rating for the course on the same scale. These ratings for each course are displayed in Table 1. Keeping in mind the rating scale, it will be noted that all of the courses from the department of Adult and Community Education were rated from 2.18 to 2.44, indicating that, on the whole, students felt that the courses were slightly more than "somewhat important" in terms of usefulness of the course material on their internships. The Communications Media courses were rated from 1.56 to 2.38, indicating that the students felt the courses were, in general, "somewhat important" to their internships.

The highest rated courses overall were Program Planning (mean = 2.44) and Facilitating Adult Learning (mean = 2.42). It is clear that the students are employing planning and facilitating skills on their internships. The next highest rated courses were The Adult Learner and Instructional Design (both with a mean = 2.38). These courses were followed closely by the Seminar course (mean = 2.32) and Organization and Administration in Adult and Community Education (mean = 2.18).

Table 1
Relevance of Academic Courses to the Internship

Course	n	Mean	SD
The Adult Learner	20	2.38	.776
Program Planning in ACE	21	2.44	.756
Org. & Adm. In ACE	17	2.18	1.21
Facilitating Adult Learning	20	2.42	1.08
Instructional Design	20	2.38	1.14
Media Production	20	1.56	.86
Instructional Computing Basics	22	1.74	1.17
Multi-Media	21	1.94	1.38
Elements of Research	19	1.21	1.81
Seminar: Adult Learning and Technology	20	2.32	1.21

An analysis was also conducted comparing the responses of younger students (under 30) to older students (those over 30). As is shown in Table 2, there was only one course with a statistically significant difference, Facilitating Adult Learning, where the younger students rated the course 2.97 while the older students rated the course 1.59. The younger students were obviously able to find more applicability of this course, devoted largely to teaching methods for adult learners, in their internships. Other courses that the younger students rated higher than the older students included The Adult Learner, Program Planning, Instructional Design, Instructional Computing Basics, Elements of Research, and the Seminar. Older student rated the following courses higher than the younger students: Organization and Administration, Media Production, and Multi-Media.

New Learning

In response to the question, "Did your internship present any new learning experiences?" the following themes were identified. Half of the students felt that the internship provided opportunities to strengthen their technology background (n =11). The internship sites often had up-to-date computers and software which went beyond the capabilities of the university to purchase. Also, the software was often tailored to specific applications that closely fit student career aspirations. There was a strong belief that internship experience helped students apply technology more effectively to real life problems (n = 10). Other mentioned themes included an increased ability to work within group dynamics (n = 6), project planning (n = 4), project management (n = 3), budgeting (n = 3), and dealing with timelines (n =1).

It was interesting to note that many of the student's felt their ability to work within professional groups was strengthened. The internship helped them develop skills that allowed them to successfully present ideas and concepts. It also help them to be more open to others ideas and perspectives.

Table 2
Differences Between Older and Younger Students Regarding the Relevance of Academic Courses to the Internship

Course	Group	n	Mean	df	t	p
The Adult Learner	Younger	12	2.56	18	1.22	.250
	Older	8	2.09			
Program Planning in ACE	Younger	13	2.60	19	1.27	.223
	Older	8	2.16			
Org. & Adm. In ACE	Younger	10	1.95	15	-.80	.445
	Older	7	2.50			
Facilitating Adult Learning	Younger	12	2.97	18	3.38	.005
	Older	8	1.59			
Instructional Design	Younger	12	2.55	18	.79	.440
	Older	8	2.12			
Media Production	Younger	12	1.50	18	-.35	.728
	Older	8	1.65			
Instructional Computing Basics	Younger	13	1.92	20	.85	.406
	Older	9	1.47			
Multi-Media	Younger	12	1.82	19	-.46	.651
	Older	9	2.11			
Elements of Research	Younger	11	1.44	17	.65	.521
	Older	8	.91			
Seminar	Younger	13	2.38	18	.25	.802
	Older	7	2.21			

Self-Learning

Students were also asked to identify their personal growth and development during the internship. The most frequent response to this question was that the students felt that the internship helped them gain professional confidence (n = 9). Students are often unsure of their expertise and ability to function in the professional world. Internships help overcome this fear. It was surprising to note that the internship helped students to become "more patient" in working with other professionals (n = 4). Some students mentioned that they learned to "not take things so personally" (n = 2).

Other mentioned themes were; "that a entrepreneurial spirit was learned" (n = 2), that they "learned to be a leader" (n = 2) and that they "learned to work with others (n = 5). The internships seem to be instrumental in helping individuals be less focused on self and to become more of a team player.

When the students are divided by age, the responses of those over 30 (n = 9) can be compared to those under 30 (n = 13). It is interesting to note that in regards to the theme of building professional confidence there are respondents in both age groups (5 from the younger students and 4 from the older students). In addition, learning to work better with others was also split with 2 younger students and 3 older students mentioning this theme. Learning patience was split with 3 younger and 1 older students mentioning this theme. The other three themes, entrepreneurial spirit, learning to be a leader, and learning not to take things personally were only mentioned by the younger students.

Career Opportunities

The internship was found to provide an important path for students in search of employment. Over half of the interviewed students were able to find employment as an adult educator (n = 13) either directly or indirectly as a result of their internship. Although most of the students did not find employment at the internship site, the confidence gained and the experience earned made them attractive to employers. There were six people that had professional jobs in the adult education field before they took the internship. These students took an internship to learn new skills that would position them for promotion or career changes. Several of these students mentioned that a relevant master's degree was required for a promotion within the organization that employed them. One student moved on to a PHD program and was not presently looking for employment.

Reflections on the Graduate Program as a Whole

Students were also asked how the internship contributed to their overall masters degree experience. By far, the most mentioned response was that the internship helped to connect theory to practice (n = 11). Students found that the connections made were valuable in seeing the larger picture. Classroom theory became more relevant and had more purpose. It was also noted that the internship was valuable for those students who returned to the classroom after the internship experience (n = 4). These students noted that the classroom had more relevance and was more enjoyable to them. Other themes that were mentioned were that the internship provided new learning (n = 2) and gave opportunities for networking (n = 1).

DISCUSSION

The data indicate that students have mixed reactions regarding the relevance of classroom learning to the internship. This is to be expected as the focus and content of internships differ just as the prior experience of each student differs. The assumption regarding internships and younger students is often that the internship provides real world experience that they are lacking. With older students who come to graduate school with significant work histories, this assumption can not be made as a primary benefit of an internship. For these students the question becomes, how does an internship add to their educational experience in graduate school?

The statistical data indicate that all students found some value in most courses in terms of the courses' applicability to their internship. It is interesting to note that the adult education (non-technical) courses were generally rated higher than the communications courses. This may be due to the universality of the topics addressed in adult education as opposed to the more specific technologies learned in communications which would have far greater differences in applicability to internships based on the topic of the internship. Another interesting findings is that there was a statistically significant difference between the younger and older students in the teaching methods course, Facilitating Adult Learning, with younger students finding this course more applicable. This may be due to younger students being called upon to teach in an internship when they have had little or no teaching experience.

The new learning of students focused primarily on the learning of job-site specific applications of technology. This is a prime example of the positive use of internships and how internships can compliment academic coursework. In this case, the internship becomes an extension of the classroom allowing students the opportunity to enhance technical skills learned in a generic way in the classroom by making specific applications of the technology on the job.

Both younger and older students cited building professional confidence as a primary self-learning benefit from the internship. This appears to be a logical consequence for younger students who may not have had significant professional work experience. For the older students it may be that the internship provided a new setting in which they had to prove themselves. Their performance on the internships added to their sense of self confidence by showing that they could successfully make a career transition and compete in a setting with which they were not familiar. Learning to work with others and developing patience were also cited as benefits by both younger and older students indicating that, at least for this study, these are areas of continuous personal learning and development regardless of age and experience.

Whether a student saw career opportunities in the internship is strongly related to their current employment status. As expected, students not currently employed in full-time professional positions were more likely to be looking for (and find) career opportunities from their internship.

Students generally agreed, regardless of age, that the internship helped them connect theory to practice. This finding helps substantiate the idea that a practical learning experience such as an

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internship is useful even when students come to a graduate program with significant professional experience.

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THE VALUE OF HIGHER EDUCATION: A LATINO PERSPECTIVE

Denise K. Hay

ABSTRACT: The intent of this study was to investigate the perceived value of higher education in the Hispanic community of Philadelphia. Following a qualitative open-ended interview format, eight individuals who are presently educators or advise students were interviewed. Results were compared to previous research studies on college participation and degree attainment. Information presented contradicted the stereotypes of barriers for Hispanics to successful entry and degree completion, such as English as a second language, the effects of alleged substandard public education in poor inner city communities, and an overall devaluing of education.

INTRODUCTION

While the Latino population is the fastest-growing segment within the United States, Hispanics are underrepresented in the college participation and degree attainment statistics (Chahin, 1993; National Economic Council [NEC], 2000). Hispanic students combat not only racism and poverty, but also the compounding effect in many cases of having English, the language in which this economy communicates, as their second language (Bustamente, Carlson, & Chavez, 1989; Gandara, 1994). Additionally, higher percentages of Hispanic students drop out of college in their first year than do their white non-Hispanic counterparts (NEC, 2000). Against these odds, Latinos have succeeded in pursuing and attaining degrees.

RELATED LITERATURE

Studies have been conducted among selected populations in postsecondary educational programs in an attempt to identify the barriers and/or enhancers to college attendance. According to Cross (1981) the barriers to educational participation may be categorized into three subsets: dispositional, situational, and institutional factors. A clear definition of the value placed on a college degree in conjunction with the identification deterrents and enhancers under the control of institutions, the student's themselves, or significant individuals in their lives, may serve to increase Latino participation.

Chief in the category of dispositional factors (Cross, 1981) is attitude toward education. Attitude relates to personal determinants that either encourage or deter an individual from performing a behavior. Studies have identified the desire for personal enrichment (American Association of University Women [AAUW], 1999), the necessity of the degree to improve career opportunities (AAUW, 1999), the desire for upward social mobility (Gandara, 1994), and the value of education in attainment of personal goals (Pendarvis & Howley, 1995) as creating a positive attitude. Two factors, family support of continuing education and self-esteem (Pendarvis &

Howley, 1995) may either enhance or deter attitude depending upon whether the factors are positive or negative.

Situational factors refer to life circumstances (Cross, 1981). When college is viewed as the next step after high school (AAUW, 1999), and parents and educators view the student as capable and what has been termed "college material" (Flores, 1994) the chances of continuing education are enhanced. Factors that have been identified as prevalent in many of the Latino communities such as poverty (AAUW, 1999; Flores, 1994; Pendarvis & Howley, 1995) along with the need to work while in school (Pendarvis & Howley, 1995), poor inner city school districts, segregated school environments (Chahin, 1993; Flores, 1994) and a lack of role models (Fuertes & Sedlacek, 1991) contribute to a lesser chance that students will pursue postsecondary education.

Institutional factors include circumstances in both secondary and higher education (Cross 1981) that have an influence on entrance as well as persistence in higher education. They include the negative impact of extended travel to attend due to the strong familial and community (Flores, 1994), testing requirements and high GPA for entrance (AAUW, 1999), inadequate preparation and tracking in the high schools (Chahin, 1993; Pendarvis & Howley, 1995), lack of adequate counseling (Flores, 1994), the financial burden and opportunity cost of a college education (Chahin, 1993) and a lack of information about opportunities and college in general within the Latino communities (Flores). Finally, there are those factors including institutional racism and classism (Fuertes & Sedlacek, 1991; Pendarvis & Howley, 1995) that produce social anxiety among students affected by these attitudes (AAUW, 1999).

METHODOLOGY

The goal of this study was to investigate the value of a college education to members of the Philadelphia Latino community. Of the 8 subjects, 4 were women and 4 were men. Six were Puerto Rican, one from the Domican Republic, and one of Columbian heritage. All were employed full time, five in public education, from administration, teaching and technical areas, and two in higher education. One is presently enrolled in a degree program, and employed as a case manager for a Latino community group. Six had attended college directly from high school, and two had entered college as adult students. As educators and a case manager, they are role models for future students, thus impacting the college participation within that community. Purposive sampling of subjects was followed through a chain process (Gall, Borg, & Gall, 1996) in which community members and educators recommended subjects that met selection criteria of college attendance and current membership in the Latino community in an advisory capacity in the community on education.

Phenomenological interviews were conducted to identify how the informants viewed the college experience (Gall, Borg, & Gall, 1996). The interview format was semi-structured (Gall, Borg, & Gall) and centered on questions that would elicit a disclosure of the personal histories and attitudes of the informants. An interview guide was developed to direct the conversation. Each interview lasted from 45 minutes to one hour, with probing questions added to elicit disclosure of pertinent information. Interviews were audio-taped and transcribed. The interview process stopped after interviewing eight informants (Gall, Borg, & Gall). Pseudonyms were used to ensure anonymity.

Data analysis was conducted to complete the data reduction and development of emergent themes (Gall, Borg, & Gall, 1996). The researcher and an external analyst evaluated the interview transcriptions to identify these themes. Trustworthiness of data was addressed through the use of techniques to increase the credibility of the data and conclusions drawn from that data. Triangulation of data was achieved through the development of an interview guide, and involving another analyst in the identification of themes, ongoing discussion of data sets, and resulting conclusions drawn following analysis. Finally, a set of generalizations emerged to explain the phenomena of participation and the value of a college degree among these subjects.

RESULTS

The findings in this study are compatible to the three major categories outlined in Cross (1981), of dispositional, situational and institutional factors. Each of these categories includes both controllable and uncontrollable factors.

Dispositional Factors

Personal goals. Informants highlighted the fact that goals helped them in college participation and degree attainment. Whether these goals were clear going into the decision process to attend college as for Dolores, or expectations established for the individual by significant others as in the case of Joseph, goals increased the likelihood of college attendance. Finally, there were those who went to school to become role models for family members.

Family support for the decision to go to college. Most of the informants pointed to the support of their immediate family, in particular their mother. Some identified their parents' employment as a factor in making the decision to pursue a college education. Jose remembered his mother's influence describing,

> She used to come home every day and she was like cut up because she worked in an assembly line. She like, "Look, either you go to school, get an education, or you can work in an assembly line, or factory, and this is what you can expect.

For Fred, the influence of his family is still keenly felt. Of all the informants, he alone relied solely on his mother and friends' support. He felt that his siblings did not approve of his education, and the fact that he has a degree and is successful sets him apart from the members of his immediate family. He remembered, "I didn't get a lot of acknowledgment from my family."

Situational Factors

Language Issues. Any reference to Hispanic students, assumes that due to their qualifying factor of familial origin from a country that does not speak English as the primary language, that language would be a barrier to their success. As Alicia stated, "When I went to college, I was scared that the college didn't accepted [sic] me because of my language." While those who grew up in another country did face some difficulty in transitioning to this environment, most did not. Fred said, "I don't recall having any problems understanding English because we spoke both languages at home."

Family's socioeconomic circumstances. In general, these informants all came from poverty. While this presented a challenge to some, others like Delores stated, "Being poor and Hispanic, you got it made! Especially if you have good grades. I mean, financially, it was a lifesaver for me." While most did receive scholarships to attend, even this fact presented a potential barrier, due to the need to pay for books and transportation. As a result, most worked at least part time, some full time. Sylvia recalls,

> When I went to High School there was a program that was a vocational program, and I really wanted to be a part of the vocational program because it meant that I could make money. It meant that you had a job . . . I didn't want the college prep program because to me college prep meant no money. Instant money.

Comunidad. The issue of "comunidad" or community is strong but not unique to the Latino community. In Philadelphia, community creates a strong tie that binds the citizens to their neighborhood. Yet, at times, it can work against students in the pursuit of education by inhibiting movement to better schools. Sylvia proposed that "maybe in like their subconsciousness [sic] it's that fear that, you know, you're gonna be so independent." Some of the success of these informants related to the school they attended. These individuals went beyond the neighborhood school, attending parochial schools, magnet schools for talented individuals, and premier public high schools.

Family's information concerning higher education. Some parents did not enter high school, and none entered college. Thus, parental knowledge of the system was minimal. While family members, and in particular mothers, were cited as the impetus to do well in school, this was often limited to high school. Delores credited her sisters as the role models to attend college. "They set the standard . . . . Everybody was in college, so everybody had to go." As an educator, Joseph now works with children in the schools as a member of a Latino fraternity to impress on them the need for continuing their education.

Role models. The desire to be a role model to community and family runs deep in these individuals. For some, it was teachers and counselors. For others, like Maria, the goal is to be the role model that was missing from her family. She noted, "I want to be the role model for my kids that I didn't have." Fred said his goal as a role model was to talk to students, and make them believe in themselves—that, you don't want to go to college there's some other options for you. Not flipping burgers in MacDonald or selling drugs on the corner. There are other opportunities, there are tech schools, there are other trades that you could go into.

Institutional Factors

Institutional climate. Many of the informants cited their college experience as one that afforded them the ability to grow. Yet, for some, the actions of others were less than inclusive. Sylvia recalled, when talking to a college representative about pursuing her doctorate,

> I thought the person was trying to lead me away from it. And I'm like, why? You know, what makes me any different? What makes me any different from that, so I mean, I feel like doors have to be opened for . . . I guess I feel called that

> I'm going to be one of the people who's going to open doors for people and let people see, Latino people see, that you can do it.

Coming from a program that helped Latino students attain an Associate's degree, Alicia remembered that during her bachelor's program "they thought that I wasn't that smart, because my English wasn't too good. And one period of time I ask for help to the professor, and he told me to go back to the program where I started." Fred also recalled feelings of separateness when he described how one of his professors lowered the grades of the three Latinos in the class due to the fact they were not native English speakers. His recommendation was that educators take care

> How we present college . . . and that the colleges make these Latino, and Black and poor white children, make them, accepted. Have support system in the colleges—cause a lot of the things that have happened. No. I didn't feel like I was even welcome. See the difference? So, colleges need to look at why the minority kids are not coming in. What supports us?

Teacher expectations and tracking. Teachers and prior educational experiences played a large role in the decision to attend college for these informants. Speaking of the counselor who steered her toward college, Sylvia noted, "He believed in me before I believed in myself. That I was intelligent enough to even consider going to college. I had no confidence. That wouldn't even be part of my reality."

Jose and Fred both attended schools that used tracking of students. For Fred, this was positive, since he was in the first track. Yet, he now recognizes that it could have been different. He questioned, "Let's say I didn't have the expectation—if I was in group 3. Would I have been a different person? Why shouldn't I have been exposed to college?" For Jose, this was a negative factor, since he was not tracked to a college prep program. He had to fight the system to be able to attend college. Although slated to enter a "local" track in his high school he remembers thinking, "I refused to do that cause I'm not stupid so I'm not going into that track."

The value of a college education. All participants talked about the value of a college education as instilling a sense of pride. Delores noted, "I really feel like it is a moral obligation. Especially for Latino people." Jose stated that as an educator, he tells his students, "after high school you have to get ready for college." Henry recalled, "it opened a lot of windows and opened a lot of doors to new things." Sylvia, perhaps said it most eloquently when she described her feelings upon completing her undergraduate degree.

> It changed my whole life. I mean, I think it gave me my, besides and education, it made me feel that I was at the same category with other people that I would, made me feel like I could have a voice and speak on something, and people would listen to me. I felt more respected. I felt like my self-esteem was higher. I felt changed as an individual, as a woman, as a Latino woman, as, all different aspects of who I was. I just felt so much better about myself, and I knew that it was related to that degree. I celebrated when I got my degree. I celebrated all of the difficult times, and all of the nights that I had to work, and all, that I celebrated.

CONCLUSION

This study has highlighted the factors that caused these individuals to take the paths that they did. As educators, they reflect on these factors as they guide their students in their decisions. While some pinpointed barriers to their decision, all but one thus far, overcame those barriers to degree attainment. While Maria has not finished her degree program, she is determined to do so.

Of importance is the effect that educators assume in this process. Teachers that are committed to their students have played an enormous part in creating the environment that encourages students to excel. While information and support through role models is more prevalent in this community, more needs to be done to encourage both high school and college completion. Educators need to acknowledge the effect poverty has on the decision to participate. To improve degree attainment, postsecondary institutions need to discourage the marginalizing of students. The effects of their continued subordination in the dominant society must be overcome for more students to feel that the institution, including faculty and administrators, is inviting them into the academic community.

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THE INTRICACIES OF INITIATE-RESPONSE-EVALUATE IN ADULT LITERACY EDUCATION

Patsy Medina

ABSTRACT: The results of a study of adult literacy education classroom dynamics found that the predominant mode of instruction closely parallels the initiation-response-evaluation (IRE) mode that Mehan (1979) identified in his study of an elementary education classroom. The initial conclusion of this study was that adult literacy education closely parallels elementary education. A closer look at the data, however, generated some interesting differentiations.

INTRODUCTION

The objective of this research was to provide a detailed and comprehensive analytical description of classroom behavior in adult literacy education. When it was conceived, the research question was very general, "What is transpiring in adult literacy classrooms?" As data continued to be collected, the questions became more focused. For example, "What instructional activities are taking place in these classes?" "What types of questions are teachers asking?" During the data analysis phase the question became, "What does this mean?" The scholarly literature was drawn upon to make sense of the data. Yet the initial search of the prescriptive and empirical literature on adult literacy and learning did not provide the guidance that was needed. A search of the literature on classroom dynamics in elementary education proved more fruitful. Hence, the work of Hugh Mehan (1979) illuminated the findings of this study. Had his study been reviewed prior to beginning the study it might well have been dispatched as being irrelevant to a study of adult literacy education. After all, Mehan's portrayal of an elementary education class presents a picture that differs substantially from adult education theory and the prescriptive literature of adult literacy education.

METHODOLOGY

Twenty classroom sites in eight states were selected to maximize program and learner diversity. For each class, data were collected on four occasions. First the class was observed by a trained data collector. Then an open-ended teacher interview was conducted which focused on the first observation. It afforded the observer an opportunity to discuss with the teacher any episodes in the observation that needed clarification in respect to meaning and purpose. A second observation followed. After each data collection, detailed and comprehensive field notes were completed. All interviews were recorded and transcribed. Data were analyzed using grounded theory methodology. First a set of descriptive categories which were representative of classroom dynamics and interaction were identified. Starting with these preliminary categories, three researchers then coded the data and in the process identified new themes and refined and elaborated the initial themes. The coding of the three analysts was merged using the QSR NUDIST Merge Computer Program and categories were collapsed, renamed and expanded as necessary.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In his seminal study of classroom dynamics, Mehan (1979) analyzed the language used during classroom interaction from the point of view of the function that it played during a lesson. He discovered that teachers initiate an elicitation, the students respond, and then there is an evaluative interaction. These interactions were labeled Initiate-Response-Evaluate (IRE). Mehan (1979) located four distinct types of elicitations in the instructional phase of the lessons analyzed. 1) Choice elicitations dictates the student to agree or disagree with a statement provided by the teacher. 2) Product elicitations require students to provide factual responses. 3) Process elicitations calls for students' opinions or interpretations. 4) Metaprocess elicitations ask students to reflect upon the process of making connections between elicitations and responses to formulate the grounds of their reasoning. Mehan found that choice and product elicitation were the most frequent. According to Dillon (1990), the preponderance of teacher-generated question and the paucity of student-talk has been confirmed by numerous other studies.

FINDINGS

The findings from this study were quite similar. Product elicitation overwhelmingly predominated, followed, to a much lesser extent, by process elicitation. Choice and metaprocess elicitations were barely existent. Yet, what was so surprising was the pervasiveness of its occurrence. IRE predominated in the majority of the 20 adult literacy in the sample regardless of their geographical location or whether they were located in public schools, community colleges or community-based organizations and regardless of the contextual focus such as basic education, GED, workplace literacy, and family literacy. The high predominance of product elicitation suggests that adult literacy education is highly oriented toward discrete skills development in its structure. Given this conclusion, it was very easy to mistakenly infer that most adult literacy classrooms are very similar in their structure. Consequently, it was necessary to expand the analyses of the IRE construct and include variables such as goals of the teacher, learner to learner interaction, relevance of curricula to their lives, and classroom environment in order to analyze the nuances of classroom dynamics in adult literacy classrooms and distinguish them from one another. These analyses led to the development of a typology.

A TYPOLOGY

In respect to the structure and content of instruction, the classes observed can be divided into two broad categories: discrete-skill-oriented and making-meaning-oriented.

Discrete-Skill Orientation

The overwhelming majority of the classes observed (16 or 80%), fall into the category of discrete-skill-orientation. Attributes of a discrete-skill-orientation are:

- Teacher-prepared and teacher-delivered lessons focusing on the conveyance of factual information and literal recall from learners.
- The predominance of commercially published materials for reading, writing, math and GED instruction.
- Lessons that are organized into distinct time periods. Each lesson has a clear beginning and a clear end.
- Focus on the discrete skills that encompass traditional subject areas. For example, reading is divided into such things as comprehension, inference, facts and opinions, etc. In Math, there is an emphasis on the rules governing mathematical operations.
- A high degree of teacher-to-learner and learner-to-teacher interaction and a low degree of learner-to-learner interaction.

Although a discrete-skills-orientation was clearly evident in all the sixteen classes grouped under this category, there were differences among the classes that can be explained by three sub-categories: decontextualized instruction, contextualized instruction and disjointed instruction.

Decontextualized instruction. The discrete-skills-oriented classes identified as being decontextualized represent the purest form of discrete-skill-oriented instruction; nine of the classes observed fell into this category. Lessons focused clearly on discrete skill building and the elicitations that followed were almost exclusively product elicitations. Teachers seemed primarily concerned with moving learners from one level to another, from pre-GED to GED for example, or from one grade level on a standardized test to another grade level. The structure of these classes revolved around teacher-prepared and teacher-delivered lessons organized into distinct time units that moved from one activity or subject area to another. For the most part, the content of instruction was framed by the subject being taught and the commercially published ABE materials employed in teaching it, rather than by the systematically diagnosed needs of learners or by learners' adult experience. In decontextualized instruction, free and open discussion characterized by learner to learner interaction and use of authentic activities was very rare.

Contextualized instruction. Four classes were categorized as contextualized. Although in contextualized classes product elicitations dominated and the emphasis was still on discrete-skills, process elicitations that sought learners' attitudes and opinions were also part of classroom discourse. Occasionally instructional content was contextualized around themes that were related to the learners' lives, although in most cases the teacher generated the themes. While some materials used were commercially published, authentic reading and writing materials and activities were apparent too. In short, although the contextualized classes we observed were clearly discrete-skills in orientation, and although instruction was usually decontextualized, there were also episodes where instruction became contextualized around the lives and experiences of learners.

Disjointed instruction. Three of the sixteen classes fell into this category. In disjointed instruction, the instructional content was so unfocussed that teaching goals and objectives could not be inferred from observation and much of what transpired seemed to happen by chance. When learners engaged in academic tasks, they tended not to complete them. Teachers seemed more focused on keeping learners busy and making them comfortable than on providing coherently organized instruction. Although little teaching per se took place in these classes, when it did it was consistent with a discrete-skill-orientation. Although teachers seemed to be concerned about their learners, this concern was expressed primarily through affective interactions rather than though structured learning activities. In disjointed instruction, it was as if affect had replaced substance.

Meaning-Making-Orientation

A meaning-making-orientation is the second category. Only four of the twenty classes observed fell into the meaning-making category. The attributes of a making meaning -orientation are:

- In addition to reading, writing and mathematical skill development, meaning-making instruction focuses on such things as problem solving skills, critical thinking, creativity and social awareness.
- Meaning making instruction emphasizes process over structure and lessons are less likely to be structured into discrete units bounded by time.
- There is considerably more collaboration between teachers and learners than in discrete-skills-oriented classes.
- For the most part, authentic materials are used rather than commercially published ones.
- Teachers tend to function more as facilitators and process managers than as conveyors.
- Authority relationships between teachers and learners tend to be more level than in discrete-skills classes. All the teachers in this category negotiated curricular content with learners to some extent.
- There is a high level of learner engagement.

Communication is learner-to-learner as well as teacher-to-learner and learner-to teacher and learners express their feelings and opinions spontaneously.

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

The results of classification analysis clearly support one of the initial conclusions of this study that, for the most part, adult literacy instruction is oriented toward the conveyance of factual information and the development of discrete basic skills. This conclusion is supported by other studies in the field of adult literacy education (Collins, 1992; Koen, 1986; McCune & Alamprese, 1985; Mezirow, Darkenwald, & Knox, 1975; Purcell-Gates, Degener, & Jacobson, 1998; Young, Fitzgerald, Morgan, 1994). At the same time, however, the typology clarifies some of the differences among the classes observed. Although they are in the distinct minority, there are discrete-skills classes where instruction is to some degree contextualized around the lives and experiences of learners. There are also classes where instruction is disjointed and lacks focus, and there are making-meaning classes where process is emphasized over structure and an effort is made to develop problem solving skills, critical thinking and social awareness. This raises the question of what kind of instruction is best. On one hand, what is termed discrete-skill-oriented instruction may be the most efficient way of moving learners to higher levels as defined by commonly used standardized tests and the quickest way to help learners pass the GED tests. On the other, it could be that this form of instruction in inadequate if the objective is to prepare learners for meaningful employment in today's workforce or success in higher education.

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Refereed Papers

WHERE CANCER PATIENTS RECEIVE INFORMATION: A COMPARATIVE STUDY WITH PATIENTS AND THE PERCEPTIONS OF HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONALS

Eileen Milakovic

ABSTRACT: A cancer diagnosis makes a strong impact on an individual and family, and almost always results in the seeking of more information. Where this group goes to acquire this knowledge and where health care professionals believe they seek knowledge has been questioned. Both groups were surveyed and divided by locale--urban, suburban, or rural--and the patients are also divided by age. Despite the expectations of health care professionals, the public does not consistently acquire this information from appropriate sources.

INTRODUCTION

The diagnosis of a potentially fatal illness, such as cancer, is one of the most stressful occurrences for a person, their spouse, and family. Patients and families that have been impacted by a cancer diagnosis choose to, or choose not to seek information about the disease process, treatment options, and prognosis in a variety of ways. They access the Internet, go to the library and bookstores, and initiate discussions with a variety of people, not always the appropriate health care professionals. By identifying these individuals, their methods, their resources and the effects of the information, health care professionals may be able to devise ways in which to promote empowerment through knowledge.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this study is to identify and define the sources from which people affected by cancer obtain information about the disease process, treatment and resources available to them, and what their health care professionals believe these learners are utilizing. Proposed questions:

- Are there differences between urban, suburban and rural respondents in their identified information sources?
- Are there differences in information-seeking behavior related to the age of the learner?
- What is the correlation between what patients/families identify as their information sources and what their health care professionals identify as their perceptions of the sources that the learners are utilizing?
- Does the overall correlation change with variables in locale--urban, suburban or rural--of the participants' residence?

A REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

In determining the directions from which to begin a review of the literature, several choices were presented. These were:

- The stress of a cancer diagnosis – what impact does stress have on learning and information seeking
- The sources of the information that is sought out
- A learning needs assessment – how do people identify what they need to learn
- The existence of theory related to stress and decision making
- Who can best identify what needs to be learned and by whom

Literature relevance is confined to only one decade because of the power of the Internet as an information source. The oldest literature reviewed was from 1990, but most were less than five years old. The concept of having patients acquire information and becoming an integral component of the decision making process is relatively recent and is a hard sell to older generations.

Theory development writings were comprehensive and well focused on the impact of the cancer diagnosis. Lerman and Glanz (1997) considered ways in which individuals cope with stress, stating that "dispositional coping styles, including optimism, information-seeking and locus of control are theoretical extensions relevant to stress and coping" (p.118). They propose theory to benefit educators to construct interventions based on individual needs. Theirs is the Transactional Model of Stress and Coping.

Balneaves and Long (1999) offer their Proposed Transactional Model of Stress and Decision Making to complement the Conflict–Theory Model of Decision Making. They have looked more closely at the psychological impact of the patient being offered a role in decision making at a time of stress, and this offering being perceived as either a burden or a privilege. Also of concern to them is whether the stress factor impacts the quality of the decisions. The frameworks of these writings lend themselves to a variety of further research.

Lehto and Cimpich (1999) look strictly at the role of anxiety in attention functioning in newly diagnosed breast cancer patients preparing for surgery. They note a greater reduction in attention in those over age 55, and that fatigued attention led to distractibility and learning difficulty. The study measured anxiety levels with the standardized test, Tension–Anxiety sub-scale of the Profile of Mood States developed by McNair, Lorr, and Droppelmen in 1992, and four other tests. The use of five slightly differing standardized tests gave the study a stronger sense of reliability and validity. Data analysis was comprehensive and utilized a full complement of statistical measurements. The only drawback was the relatively small sample size (n = 45) for such a well researched and designed study. It is also age biased (mean = 55 years of age with a S.D. = 12), as well as a gender bias, all female subjects.

Bubela et al. (1990) also use a standardized test, the Patient Learning Needs Scale, and perform their research to also evaluate its reliability and validity. The distracting component of this piece is the absence of the survey tool or even any sample questions. Their literature review, sample size and components are comprehensive, and this, plus the reported findings give it strength.

Williams (1998) discusses a variety of learning needs assessments, specifically aimed at the learning needs of nurses, but the process of the development of the tool itself could be utilized with any group. The information provided in the approach related to a survey needs assessment well lends itself to this research topic.

Hughes, Hodgson, Muller, Robinson, and McCorkle (2000) report on a distinctly different form of research than the others reviewed here. They engage in a content analysis of 3,280 statements of teaching interventions. They utilize records kept for patients assigned to the experimental group of a larger study in 1996. The researchers in this group had no actual contact with either the study subjects or the professionals engaging in and documenting the interventions. Although this is apparently an acceptable method of engaging in and reporting research (it was published in Sigma Theta Tau's *Journal of Nursing Scholarship*), it left the reader lacking a picture of the purpose or the subjects.

The research of Gattelleri, Butow, Tattersall, Dunn, and MacLeod (1999) is presented primarily addressing the impact of physician communication. The setting in which this type of information provision usually occurs is one of both emotional stress and time constraints. Identified is the challenge to the physician to provide information in a manner responsive to the emotional status of the patient while providing sufficient information to allow informed decision-making to occur. This is indeed a challenge even before considering issues of literacy, the possible economic impact of the cancer diagnosis and treatment, and the possibility of language barriers. This research demonstrates the disparity between physician communication and patient comprehension.

Leydon et al. (2000) interviewed seventeen British patients in a qualitative study to determine why and how some patients seek information about their illness and others resist. These subjects all identified wanting basic information about diagnosis, treatment options, and side effects of treatment, but what varied was the timing, level of detail, and content. The researchers identified faith, hope and charity as elements commonly involved in the process of when to seek information and to what extent.

Faith involves the perception of the subject of the expertise of the physician, and to seek more information would demonstrate a lack of faith. Hope is seen as a required facade. Sometimes information can remove hope, especially if that hope is realistic. "The pressure to preserve a brave face and the linked pressure to avoid information about the illness was more common among men, who maintained hope through silence. Efforts to maintain hope could thus drive out interest in finding out further information" (Leydon et al., 2000, p.910). Charity is explained as the expression of concern by the patient about taking up too much of the physicians time in asking questions when others are waiting. Although this study was done in Britain, with a very different system of health care provision, the same situations are observable in this country.

Due to the brevity of this review of the literature and the range of components to cover key points of the topic, currency was identified to be of high concern. In reviewing the references for these writings, many highly relevant, though older resources were noted. The timeliness of the topic, combined with the lack of comprehensive current research documentation makes this a topic worthy of closer consideration for additional research in the future.

METHODOLOGY

Data acquisition was done by survey. The surveys were provided to twelve sites utilizing inpatient, outpatient, and physician office settings in rural, suburban, and urban areas. Patients were requested to provide their zip code to place them into one of these categories. They were requested to identify their age, diagnosis, and amount of time from original diagnosis. There were choices for them to identify what resources they have used. (See Appendix)

Health care professionals surveyed were asked to provide their profession, practice site (to differentiate between urban, suburban and rural), and whether they worked with patients in an inpatient or outpatient setting. Where the professionals believed patients acquired their cancer-related information was questioned in this format:

- Where do you believe your patients obtain most of their illness/treatment-related information? (check all that apply)

____ Physician
____ Nurse
____ Reading–magazines, newspaper, library
____ Television/videos
____ Computer/Internet
____ Community Pharmacist
____ Friends/Neighbors
____ Support groups

REVIEW OF DATA

The professional surveys were returned by 109 subjects. Registered nurses were the group with the greatest response, 76%. Of the remainder, 7% are MDs, 4% are pharmacists, and 3% or less are social workers, radiation therapy technicians, clerical staff, dietitians, or nursing assistants. Their practice settings consist of 61% (n=67) urban, 15% (n=16) suburban, and 24% (n=26) rural. Of primary interest to this study is the issue of where these professionals believe patients are receiving their disease or treatment–related information, does it differ by setting, and how does it compare to what is reported by their patients. The breakdown of results for the information sources as perceived by urban, suburban, and rural health care professionals is presented in Table 1.

The patient surveys were returned by 80 subjects. They consisted of 36% males (n=29) and 64% females (n=51). Of these, 71 were patients, 7 spouses, and 2 children. Age is differentiated only by decades. Table 2 indicates the breakdown of decade of age, locale (U=urban, S=suburban, and R=rural), whether the subject uses the Internet to obtain health information, and whether they are aware that not all of the information on the Internet is reliable. The other columns indicate the number of subjects who indicated their sources of health/ cancer-related information is obtained from magazines, newspapers, books, discussions with their health care team, discussions with others that are not health care professionals, or from television.

Table 1
Information Sources as perceived by health care professionals

Source	Urban	Suburban	Rural
Physician	70%	75%	73%
Nurse	78%	93%	77%
Reading Printed Information	75%	56%	81%
Television	40%	50%	46%
Internet	78%	62%	54%
Community Pharmacists	9%	19%	15%
Friends	61%	50%	69%
Support Groups	25%	6%	38%

Table 2
Patient Survey Data

Age/ Locale	Internet Use	Aware of Limits of Net	Maga-zines	News-paper	Books	Health Care Team	Discuss With Others	Tele-vision
20's-R	Y-1	Y-1	1	0	0	0	1	0
30's-U	Y-1	Y-1	1	1	0	1	1	1
30's-S	N-1		0	0	1	0	0	0
30's-R	Y-1,N-1	Y-2	2	0	1	0	2	0
40's-U	Y-6,N-1	Y-6	2	4	2	4	2	3
40's-S	Y-2,N-1	Y-2	1	1	1	3	2	0
40's-R	Y-5,N-1	Y-5	2	3	4	6	4	3
50's-U	Y-2,N-1	Y-2	1	1	2	2	1	1
50's-S	Y-2	Y-1,N-1	2	2	1	2	2	1
50's-R	Y-5,N-4	Y-6,N-1	4	2	6	6	5	2
60's-U	Y-2,N-3	Y-2	1	2	3	4	0	1
60's-S	Y-5,N-3	Y-4,N-2	0	1	6	8	3	2
60's-R	Y-2,N-7	Y-5	5	3	5	9	4	0
70's-U	Y-1,N-5	Y-2,N-1	4	4	2	6	4	2
70's-S	Y-1,N-2	Y-1	1	0	2	3	2	0
70's-R	N-7	N-1	1	3	0	5	3	2
80's-U	N-2	N-1	1	2	0	2	0	0
80's-S	N-1	Y-1	0	1	0	1	1	0
80's-R	N-3	N-1	1	1	1	2	1	0

IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE

The acquisition of information by adults can be greatly impacted by the stress of a potentially fatal illness. Educators must be respecters of the choices of each individual to seek information from a variety of sources.

Western Pennsylvania has one of the highest senior citizen populations in this country. This senior population has been perceived to be reluctant to utilize the new technology of the Internet. Although this study disproves this idea in the surveyed population, it does serve to remind educators that not all Internet users are cognizant of the presence there of inaccurate or unreliable information. One component of teaching adults about using the Internet for health, or any other information, is to teach them how to differentiate truth from fiction in this new arena of information.

This research is an opportunity for professionals to acquire a better view of what patients are utilizing so that they may fill the information gaps appropriately. This research will also identify some of the impact of the Internet on this learning process. Through the process of differentiating locale, health care professionals at different practice sites could structure their teaching methods appropriately.

APPENDIX
SURVEY QUESTIONS

❖ So that we may provide better services to you we would like to know more about you.

1. Who are you?
   Patient _____, Spouse ____, Other _____

2. Are you Male _____ or Female _____?

3. Your age? 20's _____, 30's _____, 40's _____, 50's _____,
   60's _____, 70's _____, over 80 _____

4. Educational history: Last grade of high school completed _____

   Number of years of post–high school formal education _____

❖ Knowing that people learn things in different ways, especially at stressful times in their lives, such as these, we would like to ask some questions about how you learn about your health situation.

5. From what kinds of information do you think you learn most easily? (check any that work for you):

   Reading: Newspapers _____, Books _____, Magazines _____
   Television/videos _____
   Computer–Internet _____
   Talking with a member of your health care team _____
   Talking with someone with similar experiences _____

6. Do you use the Internet to get health information?

Yes _____ or No _____

7. If "Yes," do you know how to tell whether the information there is correct?

Yes _____, or No _____, or Do not use Internet _____

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ADULT STUDENTS SPEAK OUT
A FOCUS GROUP RESEARCH PROJECT

Sherry Miller Brown

ABSTRACT: In August 1999, the College of General Studies at the University of Pittsburgh opened a Center dedicated to the success and development of nontraditional/adult students. One of the first efforts undertaken at the Center was a series of focus groups which were intended to interview a number of students in this cohort, in order to have them identify the needs of these students on the University of Pittsburgh campus. This paper reports the findings that resulted from the focus group interviews.

INTRODUCTION

During the 1999-2000 school year, the Nontraditional Student Working Group, a subcommittee of the University's Enrollment Management Committee and the College of General Studies' Center for Nontraditional Student Success and Development at the University of Pittsburgh sponsored four adult student focus groups. It was the purpose of these focus groups to interview a number of adult students in order to have them identify the support needs of these students on the University of Pittsburgh campus. A total of 28 students attended these group meetings. They represented undergraduate adult students from the Schools of Pharmacy, Nursing and Information Science and the Colleges of Arts and Sciences, Business Administration and General Studies. Each group of students was asked the following set of questions:

- How would you suggest the University of Pittsburgh empower adult students to negotiate the culture of higher education?
- How responsive do you perceive the University to be regarding the special needs of the adult students? What are those needs?
- How supportive do you perceive the following staff at the University to be towards adult students: Faculty?; Administration?; Support Staff?
- What special type of Student Support Services should be available to adult students?

The questions for these focus groups were formulated from discussions in the working group's meetings and the College of General Studies Administrative staff meetings, which centered on identifying the services that were available for nontraditional/adult students and attempts to interpret student needs.

METHODOLOGY

The focus group interview is a technique which can be used for gathering qualitative data about educational/instructional effectiveness (Swanson & Gorder, 1999). Focus group research is used primarily for exploratory purposes with a small group of subjects drawn from the segment of interest (Ponsford & Masters, 1998). Historically, the focus group interview traces its roots to the use of the group therapy methods (Szybillo & Berger, 1979). The technique involves the use of in-depth interviews in which participants are selected because they are a purposive, although not necessarily representative, sampling of a specific population. The name, focus group, derives from the selection of groups which are "focused" on a given topic. Its conceptualization is based on the therapeutic assumption that people who share a common problem will be more willing to talk amid the security of others with the same problem. Consequently, homogeneity is an important prerequisite for meaningful exploration of the topic upon which the group is "focused"(Lederman, 1990). In the last three decades, focus group interviews have been most widely used in market research where the technique was adopted in reaction to the limitations found in the use of large sample polling techniques (Adler, 1979; Bohner, Goety, Richter & Serdi, 1978; Calder, 1977; Cox, Higginbothan, & Burton, 1976; Reynolds & Johnson, 1978; Szybillo & Berger, 1979). Although the polling techniques were providing market researchers with numbers, the surveys generated little insight into what was really going on in the marketplace, the "why" behind the numbers, (Cox, Higginbothan, & Burton, 1976). According to Lederman (1990), to address the shortcomings, the focus group interview technique was embraced to explore people's thoughts, feelings and behaviors. Thus, the emphasis in the use of group interviews is on their ability to generate data about the "why" behind the behavior; the ability to ask the kinds of questions that surveys don't ask and that individual interviews also miss.

Lederman (1990) points out that the central premise on which the use of the focus group interview is based is the therapeutic assumption regarding openness and candor. Candor is permitted both because the members of a focus group understand and feel comfortable with one another, and also because they draw social strength from each other. She also indicates five other fundamental assumptions upon which the method rests: (1) that people themselves are a valuable source of information, including information about themselves; (2) that people can report on and about themselves, and that they are articulate enough to put into words their thoughts, feelings and behaviors; (3) that people need help in "mining" that information, a role served by the interviewer, or researcher, who "focuses" the interview in the focus group interview; (4) that the dynamics of the group can be used to surface genuine information rather than creating, a "group think" phenomenon; and (5) that the interview of the group is superior to the interview of an individual. These six assumptions provide the basis for the use of the focus group methodology for this study which had as its purpose to identify the needs of nontraditional/adult students on the University of Pittsburgh Campus.

RESEARCH FINDING RELEVANT TO THE NEEDS OF ADULT STUDENTS ON CAMPUS

What emerged from discussions within these focus groups was a broad agreement that adult students are "special". On fourteen different occasions when students were introducing

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themselves they began with the statement, "My situation is a little different". Most striking was the fact that all of the students agreed that although they felt their individual schools did a good job of supporting their development within their programs, the University could do a much better job of "reaching out" to the adult student population. Students from all four groups shared a similar perspective both on their need to be, "better informed" of services available to them on campus and also on their need to have a variety of special services available such as one-stop advising, extended office hours (evenings and Saturdays) and on-line registration capabilities. All of the students spoke of the critical importance of good advising services. Another widespread consensus was the need, expressed by participants, to have special career development/placement services for adult students since so many of them are on different steps of the career ladder as compared to traditional students. "After all, most of us are in some process of reinventing ourselves," one student said. In general, the students felt that the University should become better informed about the characteristics and requirements of adult students, including the awareness by all members of the campus community of their special needs. Students identified time constraints, family obligations and work responsibilities as some of these special needs. All of the focus group participants agreed that adult student "Advocacy" should be encouraged and developed. As one student indicated, "we need to have a space to call our own and dedicated university staff working on behalf of all adult students."

Students in every focus group stated that student developmental services and student activities at the University seemed to be designed for traditional students. While the students were reluctant to criticize this phenomena, most agreed that it would be extremely useful to have orientation programs, learning skills and career development seminars designed specifically for the adult student population. As one student said, "We need special help to get back in, to get information and keep it up-to-date and then help to get out." While focus group participants praised the special activities that are in place for adult students such as Dean's list receptions and graduation dinners they felt student activities funds could be allocated to sponsor and develop more student professional organizations on campus.

The students in the focus group generally believed that the faculty in their individual schools were responsive to their needs and especially praised those who utilized technology in their classrooms, particularly e-mail. Several students did, however, point out certain insensitivity to the needs of adult students on the part of faculty. One example was the number of faculty who assign group projects in their classes. Oftentimes adult students cannot adjust their schedules to meet with assigned group members and this creates a real conundrum for the responsible students. For the most part, students praised support staff in their schools and departments and found them to be quite helpful. Most of the students found what little exposure they had with administrators to be positive, although several questioned, "policy decisions." For example, the University's failure to cancel evening classes during the inclement weather days last January. The students also suggested that the administration seemed slow to embrace different technology, such as on-line registration, websites, and listservs.

When addressing the special types of support services that need to be available for adult students, focus group participants singled out financial aid and career counseling as absolutely critical to their success. They indicated the strong need for information regarding scholarship and grant moneys that are available for adult students, and all felt that the university could be more "proactive" in attempting to identify additional sources of funding. Career counseling was seen as an absolutely essential component of adult student academic success. All indicated that it is extremely useful to have dedicated career development and placement advisors for the adult students. One participant described his experience with the existing University Career Development and Placement Services, "I felt like I was on my own in attempting to identify with a career because they were not geared toward the adult experience." Focus group members were also very vocal when addressing their need for internship and service learning experiences within different majors. They reported their total frustration in not being able to find internships available in the evening and/or on weekends that would fit into their student and working schedules. Participants indicated that it would be very useful for the University to develop workshops regarding different graduate school opportunities, as well as requirements for such programs. It was also mentioned that short, one-half hour orientation sessions each term might be useful in keeping students informed of the many opportunities and services available to them.

In general, the findings that emerged from the four focus groups indicated a broad agreement as to a number of services that could be especially adapted to more completely serve adult students on campus. A specific list follows:

Finding One

The University needs to recognize the unique characteristics of its adult student population and to focus on developing a cultural community/perspective for these students by establishing an Adult Student Resource Center. In addition, an adult student ombudsman could be appointed to help these students negotiate the complexities of the University system and especially to act as an "advocate" when problem solving for them.

Finding Two

Adult students recognize advising to be absolutely critical to their successful integration both academically and socially to the University campus. Advisors and support staff need to be especially cognizant of the unique characteristics of the adult students, and one-stop enrollment, advising, and registration services should be available for these students.

Finding Three

Adult students recognize the need to be a more integral part of the University community. The University needs to find ways to be more proactive in providing information on the resources available to adult students. Orientation workshops/courses need to be developed specifically for these students. Various technologies and print media resources could be developed to proactively provide these resources. Examples might include an adult student handbook, websites, and listservs, as well as an adult student newsletter/paper. Adult students need to be continuously informed of class cancellations, registration deadlines, changes in schedules, and a plethora of other student activities.

Finding Four

Adult students need access to financial aid opportunities and resources. Financial aid services designed for adult students need to be developed. Adult students would benefit greatly from having their own adult student financial aid handbook.

Finding Five

Adult students should be recognized as a population uniquely focused on the development of different career opportunities. Therefore career counseling and development experiences need to be designed specifically for these students. Internships and graduate school opportunities should also be a part of the adult student career focus. The University needs to realize that placement services/opportunities ought to be especially developed for these students. In particular, adult student activities funds could be directed towards the development of more student professional clubs/groups on campus.

Finding Six

Adult students also need different kinds of learning skills opportunities. For example, these students often need "brush up" opportunities and/or tutors, particularly in math and the hard sciences. Time management skill development is another important key to the academic success of adult students. The University needs to develop learning skills workshops/experiences designed specifically for adult students. Courses to prepare adult students to take various graduate school entrance exams is another important learning skill service.

CONCLUSION

The students who participated in the focus group interviews used for this study generally pointed to the need to be recognized as a population with unique characteristics on our campus. They indicated that academic practitioners and policy makers who work with this population must recognize that efforts with them require vision and creativity to guide efforts, programs to control the conditions that encourage their personal development, and the establishment of student support systems that foster nontraditionalism.

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2001 Pennsylvania Adult & Continuing Education Research Conference

Refereed Papers

IDENTIFYING THE STATE OF THE ART: MEASURES USED TO ASSESS ADULT LEARNERS IN EVEN START FAMILY LITERACY PROGRAMS

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ABSTRACT: Since Even Start is a new field of literacy, there has been limited research on family literacy programs. A major area of concern with the new Even Start programs is how the adult learners who participate in the programs are assessed. This study surveyed a randomly selected sample of 300 Even Start programs nationally. Based on 165 responses (55%), the following findings were discovered. The most frequent form of assessment of adult learners for academic skills and parenting skills was staff observations. The GED Practice test and the TABE were also used to assess academic skills. Conclusions discuss the implications of the pervasiveness of informal assessment in Even Start.

INTRODUCTION

Evolving from the projects of the Kenan Trust of the late 1980s, the field of family literacy is relatively new to the educational realm and, as such, scant knowledge exists regarding family literacy's different aspects, effects, and outcomes. Family literacy programs deal with the family as a unit, rather than singling out children or adults exclusively, as do most educational efforts. Family literacy's core philosophy declares parents to be children's first and most important teachers and considers the familial setting to be a particularly effective educational environment. Family based programs tend to reflect these two fundamental philosophical tenets. Preliminary data pertaining to family based programs are only now appearing on the research landscape and much of these are incomplete and inconclusive (Brizius & Foster, 1993).

A chief problem that one encounters when investigating family literacy is the modest size of its literature base. The limited amount of scholarly work in family literacy to date is owed in part to the field's youth as well as to its novel approach, which attempts to integrate adult education with early childhood education, parent education, and family based learning activities. This melding of program components has led to many new challenges, including an increased complexity in the measurement of outcomes, an already problematic area. Not only have little data been collected pertaining to the efficacy of family-based literacy programs, but in many instances, no valid means exist with which to measure and document the effectiveness of family based programs.

The nation's largest endeavor in family literacy is the U.S. Department of Education's Even Start program, created in 1988 (Nickse, 1993; St. Pierre, Swartz, Gamse, Murray, Deck, & Nickel, 1995). Even Start, with more than 700 sites and 30,000 students nationwide, has grown manyfold in its twelve years of existence. Yet, since little research is available regarding assessment of adult participants in Even Start programs, one is left to wonder exactly how and in what ways Even Start measures the progress of its adult students. This, then, constitutes the problem at hand: By what means and methods do Even Start family literacy programs measure the various competencies of their adult learners?

PROBLEM STATEMENT AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The purpose of this study was to identify and describe current assessment procedures used to measure the progress of adult students in Even Start family literacy programs. The study investigated the types of assessment used, effectiveness of assessment, reasons for assessment, and choice of assessment procedures in Even Start programs. The research questions addressed in this study are as follows:

1. How are the academic competencies of adult learners served by Even Start assessed?
2. How are the parenting skills of adult learners served by Even Start assessed?
3. What assessment procedures and instruments are most effective for assessing the academic competencies of adult learners served by Even Start?
4. For what purposes are assessment procedures and instruments used in Even Start programs?
5. How are the assessment procedures and instruments used by Even Start programs selected?

METHODOLOGY

The sample consisted of three hundred randomly selected Even Start sites throughout the United States. The surveys were addressed to the director of each particular site. Even Start site coordinators were considered to be best equipped to supply the information requested by the survey since they had access to pertinent statistics as well as a local perspective on their own programs.

Obtaining the sample included the following steps. A mailing list of the approximately 740 Even Start sites in the U.S. was acquired through the United States Department of Education. Then from that list 300 Even Start sites were chosen randomly using a random number generator. An initial and follow-up mailing yielded 165 (55%) usable responses to the survey. The survey questionnaire consisted of 17 items. It included three types of inquiry: (1) questions requesting an approximate number or amount regarding some programmatic aspect; (2) check-boxes, which essentially stated "Yes" or "No" on a certain item; and (3) questions in which respondents were asked to rate a particular item on a scale of 1 to 6.

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FINDINGS

Demographics

Demographic data were collected in the first part of the survey. The assortment of responding programs was well-balanced in terms of the programs' service areas, those areas described by the survey as being "rural," "urban," or "small to medium size town." The duration and longevity of the responding programs was also fairly well distributed, with more recent as well as established programs evenly represented by the survey's data. The study is thus able to paint a broad, yet accurate picture of assessment in Even Start through this diverse and extensive sample group. The sample's fullness, random selection methodology, well-balanced distribution patterns, and solid response rate of 55% contribute to the study's robust data set.

The study's findings show that women participate in Even Start considerably more than men. For example, the average number of females per program was 40.96, whereas the average number of males was 5.01. The minimum number of females participating in a responding Even Start program was 8, with the maximum number being 168. The smallest number of male program participants was 0, with the largest number participating in a program being 85. The level of learner most served by the responding Even Start programs was the 9-11 grade group, with a mean score of 20.32, which represents 47.0% of the total respondents. Data from the survey yielded a mean of 16.22 for learners 8th grade or less (37.52% of total *n*). In terms of financial need, 61.22% of participants in the responding Even Start programs received some form of public assistance.

Assessing Adult Learners' Academic Progress

Research question 1, regarding the effectiveness of methods of academic assessment, was measured with a simple checklist to which respondents could check "yes" or leave blank. In terms of which assessment methods the responding programs actually use, the data show a preference for staff observations (79.3% of responding programs use this form of assessment), GED Practice Tests (78.7%), and the Tests of Adult Basic Education (TABE), used by 67.1% of programs. The data also show that about half of the responding programs make use of portfolios for academic assessment (52.72%).

The average number of students pre-tested by Even Start programs was 37.60 per program, whereas the average number of students who were post-tested was 25.03 per program. The data show a pattern of a fairly long wait for students before being post-tested, with the highest percentage of responses (34.2%) being post-tested "after 75+ hours of instruction." The next highest percentage was "after 51-75 hours of instruction" (20.5%). Both choices represented the two longest time intervals available to survey respondents.

Assessing Parenting Skills

For research question 2, respondents were asked to identify and rate the various methods used to assess parenting skills. By far the most-used method for assessing parenting and Parent And Child Together (PACT) Time skills (77.9% and 76.7%, respectively) was "anecdotal records kept by Even Start staff." The least used method of the choices available for this survey item was "standardized testing," which received 30.1% for parenting and 8.0% for PACT Time. Four and nine-tenths percent of programs did not assess parenting skills at all, and another 9.3% did not attempt to assess adult students' performance in PACT Time in any way.

Anecdotal records kept by staff were the method most used by responding programs to assess the parenting abilities of adult students. Although standardized tests were used by the fewest programs for assessing parenting skills, they did have the highest frequency of use (mean = 4.92, on a scale of 1-6, where 1 = rarely used and 6 = very often used) by those programs that employed them. Anecdotal records kept by staff were used almost as frequently (mean = 4.71) and in considerably more of the responding programs. For assessing the PACT Time performance of Even Start's adult students, more of the responding programs used anecdotal records to inform themselves of students' progress than any other method. The method or instrument used in the fewest programs for assessing the PACT Time performance of Even Start participants was standardized tests.

Effectiveness of Academic Assessment

For research question 3 respondents were asked to rate the effectiveness of the instruments and methods their programs use. Again, the rating system is a 6-point Likert scale, with a score of "1" meaning "not effective" and a score of "6" meaning "very effective." Each instrument on the checklist was rated separately.

In rating the academic assessments their programs use, survey responders had a few distinct preferences in their methods and instruments. The respondents' rated the Official GED Practice Tests to be most effective, with a mean of 5.33. The second most highly rated method was staff observations (mean = 5.17), with third most effective being the Tests of Adult Basic Education (TABE), with a mean rating of 5.02. Portfolios were also rated fairly high on their effectiveness (mean = 4.97).

Purposes of Assessment

For research question 4 the study sought to answer, "For what purposes are assessment procedures and instruments used in Even Start programs?" Respondents were asked to identify and rate two sets of items: The purposes for which assessment is currently used in their programs and the purposes for which they believe assessment should be used in their programs. The purposes respondents were asked to rate were: To help participants pass academic tests, to help participants pass job related tests, to improve curriculum, to assist participants with job skills, to help participants to enhance life skills, and to show program results to funders. On both questionnaire items, a "1" response signified that an assessment is or should be "not used for that reason," while a "6" response denoted an assessment procedure that is or should be "primarily used for this purpose."

The highest rated reason for current assessment procedures among the Even Start responders was "to show program results to funders," with a mean of 4.97 out of a possible 6. Of the current purposes of assessment choices, the lowest rated selection was, "to help participants pass job-related tests," with a mean score of 3.78. In the sphere of what the purposes of assessment should be in Even Start, the responses were quite different, with the choice "to help participants enhance life skills," topping the list with a mean score of 5.34 of a possible 6. This choice was followed by "to help participants with job skills" (mean = 5.25) and "to improve curriculum" (mean = 5.24) rounding out the top three responses.

Selection of Assessment Methods

Dealing with research question 5, which sought to understand how assessment procedures and instruments are selected, respondents were asked to identify who does and who should have the most influence over the selection of assessment instruments and procedures in Even Start programs. The following responses were rated on a 6 point scale (from 1 = not influential to 6 = very influential): Adult instructor, program participants, site director, state officials, and other.

Responses for who does have influence on the selection process show that state officials are the most influential people in determining assessment instruments and procedures among the Even Start. The mean for state officials is 4.75. Adult instructors were the next most-influential (mean = 4.63), followed by site directors (mean = 4.56). Most of the means were clustered fairly close together, the only exception being program participants, who have considerably less influence than all others in the Even Start programs responding to the survey (mean = 2.93). Regarding who should be most influential in their program's choice of assessment, responders chose adult instructors as those they would most wish to see influence the selection of assessment instruments and procedures (mean = 5.28).

DISCUSSION

Pre- and Post-testing of Students

When performing initial assessment concerning the competencies of Even Start's adult learners, programs tended to pre-test the majority of their enrollment successfully, yet a much smaller average number of students received post-testing before exiting Even Start programs. For example, on average, for their most recent grant year, the responding programs enrolled 43.23 students per program, pre-tested 37.60 students per program, and post-tested 25.03 students per program. The sizable drop between the numbers of students pre-tested and those post-tested suggests a large decline in enrollments, but it also signifies a diminished understanding of the effectiveness of Even Start's endeavors.

Another important finding indicated that Even Start students were post-tested after fairly long intervals, suggesting that longer periods between pre-testing and post-testing are not seen as problematic by most Even Start programs. On this particular survey item, most responses to "Other" also involved fairly lengthy periods of time, all of which could entail considerably more than 75 instructional hours. The many Even Start programs who go for long periods without assessment could strengthen their programs greatly by building more opportunities for assessment into program activities. That programmatic strengthening would arise from having better, more comprehensive documentation of student progress, as well as from a deeper, more informed knowledge of students' needs and achievements.

PACT Time and Parent Education

The assessment of PACT Time and parenting skills supplied some of the most interesting results of the study. For starters, these almost universally offered components were assessed primarily through informal measures, when they were assessed at all. In fact, nearly 1 program in 10 did not assess PACT Time in any way, while about 1 in 20 programs did not attempt to assess parenting skills in any way. The result: The family literacy components revealed by the data to be most widely delivered by Even Start programs are also those that have the biggest gaps in their assessment procedures and that are rarely assessed with any formal measures. Rather, PACT Time and parent education are gauged largely by using a potpourri of informal assessments, the most often used being anecdotal records kept by Even Start staff members. This results in lack of consistent data collection among programs and leads to the observation that the quality of data collected by some programs may be questionable.

The Trend of Informal Assessment

The trend toward informal assessments weaves its way throughout the data from the responding Even Start programs. Informal assessments are not necessarily a bad thing, but a lack of uniformity across these measures in more than 700 Even Start programs nationwide is problematic. One has to wonder about the lack of structure and overall validity of result when a hodgepodge of informal assessments represents the chief means of measuring both PACT Time and parenting skills in a national, comprehensive program.

Informal measures also played a big role in the academic assessment of adult participants in Even Start programs. Even though many programs use the TABE and Official GED Practice Tests as their primary academic testing instruments, staff observations and portfolios were rated by respondents almost as highly as GED Practice Tests in effectiveness for purposes of academic assessment. Overall, staff observations were used in more programs than GED Practice tests. This study's data have consistently shown that informal measures are broadly utilized and considered to be effective by Even Start program directors. Based on the study's data, one could safely say that informal assessments constitute the largest part of what takes place as "assessment" in Even Start programs. This is no small thing when one considers the 700-plus Even Start programs and the more than 30,000 students they serve.

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FAMILY LITERACY AND ADULT EDUCATION: INFORMING PRACTICES THAT ENCOURAGE PARTICIPATION

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ABSTRACT: While adult education programs continue to flourish, adults with the lowest levels of education who may benefit from these activities, are least likely to participate. Internal and external variables that hinder participation along with motivations that support engagement in learning often operate at cross purposes and at different levels. A review of the literature suggests that intergenerational or family literacy practices that incorporate aspects of community-based learning may promote participation in educational activities by building on strengths and transforming negative self-attitudes and beliefs about oneself as a learner and about the relevance of educational programs.

INTRODUCTION

In an age of rapid technological advancement, participation in lifelong learning becomes essential for adults to acquire new knowledge and upgrade skills in order to succeed (U.S.DOE, 1996). Nonetheless, there exists a huge gap in equity of participation in adult learning programs between adults with high levels of educational attainment compared to those with lower levels of education. Contributors to sustaining that gap are dispositional, situational, and institutional factors that have been identified as deterrents to involvement in potentially beneficial critical learning activities. In considering interventions that work to encourage participation in lifelong learning, this paper will first review models of adult participation. Second, it will begin to examine the contribution that family literacy practices may bring to lessening the gap in participation. Third, it will explore the contribution that community based learning may provide for effectiveness of family literacy practices.

ADULT EDUCATION PARTICIPATION

Studies show that current and future job related goals most frequently direct adults into educational programs, suggesting a clear link between one's work life and participation in adult education (Kim & Creighton, 1999). However, in a Catch-22, findings also indicate a clear correlation between positive or relatively successful educational experiences with a readiness and motivation to participate in organized education in adult life (Merriam & Caffarella, 1999). Studies suggest that previous educational experience acts independently of socio-economic status and income and seems to indicate that both perceptions of and actual school experiences are more significant predictors of willingness to engage in adult education than one's particular occupation (Darkenwald & Merriam, 1982).

Findings from a recent survey on educational activities of adults in the U.S. reflects a correlation with educational level: overall participation rate for adults with less than a high school diploma was 22 percent; 37 percent for those with a high school diploma; 52 percent for those with some college, an Associates's degree, or a vocational/technical diploma; and 62 percent for those with a Bachelor's degree or higher. About two in ten adults without a high school diploma participated in any educational activities, compared to more than six in ten adults with a bachelor's degree or higher (Kim & Creighton, 1999).

Barriers to Participation

Looking more closely at barriers to participation, theorists have identified institutional, dispositional, and situational barriers that deter engagement of adults in programs. Situational barriers arise from one's situation at a given time and may include lack of money to pay for program costs, child care, lack of time, perhaps due to job and family responsibilities, or lack of transportation and geographical isolation to get to programs. Institutional barriers include practices and procedures that exclude or discourage adults from participating in activities such as inconvenient locations or scheduling of programs and a lack of relevant or appropriate programs (Cross, 1981). Informational barriers, defined by Darkenwald and Merriam (1982) relate to a lack of information and awareness of educational opportunities available. Dispositional factors, reflect personal attitudes and self-perceptions about oneself as a learner such as feeling too old to learn or a lack of confidence because of "poor" or negative previous educational experiences (Merriam & Cafferella, 1999).

Models of Participation

Lack of participation is not generally caused by any one variable or even any one cluster of variables but, rather, by multifaceted reasons often combining dispositional, institutional, and situational barriers. However, internal, dispositional elements of self-perception and attitudes created through experience and transitions significantly effect motivation to engage in educational activities. In a study conducted by Hall and Donaldson (1977) several reasons were identified as to why women who had not graduated from high school chose not to participate in adult education programs including lack of time, information, child care, lack of a support system, as well as parents' education, early pregnancies, and economic status. However, "At the heart of nonparticipation lies a 'deterrent' so deeply embedded in some women that no theory can fully capture its meaning. The way a woman feels about herself, her self-esteem and self-confidence, and the way she can express herself are significant elements in her decision about whether to participate in adult education." (Hall & Donaldson, 1997). Hall and Donaldson (1997) referred to this last factor as "lack of voice."

Rubenson (1977) views the motivation to participate as the interaction between expectancy and valence. This involves the expectation of being successful in an educational activity and the value one ascribes that being successful in the activity will have positive, negative or indifferent effects.

The Life Transitions theory, studied by Aslanian and Brickell, suggests that participation in educational activities is often linked to transitions, or changes in life circumstances. Some of these transitions include changes in job, marriage, divorce, having children, loss, and retirement; these transitions create either a need or a desire for training and education or an openness to seek out and participate in new opportunities (Merriam & Caffarella, 1999). Havinghurst's notion of the "teachable moment" may be related to a readiness associated with life transitions in which a new awareness based on a change in one's life awakens one's receptivity to engage in learning (Merriam & Caffarella, 1999).

Darkenwald and Merriam's (1982) psycho- social theory of participation examines the degree to which an adult's environment and group membership effects their orientation to participate in educational activities. Engaging people from the community of one's reference group to participate or facilitate programs can positively influence those who may have been hesitant to join. Related in part to social groups is the factor of social relationships as a reflection of participation. Participation in programs for social relationships was identified by Morstain and Smart, who extended the work of Houle and Boshier (Merriam & Caffarella, 1999).

Drawing on these different, yet overlapping variables that work to influence participation Cross (1981) developed a seven-stage, "Chain of reponse" model to explain the interrelationships of psychological and environmental variables. "Participation in a learning activity", according to Cross, " whether in organized classes or self-directed, is not a single act but the result of a chain of responses, each based on an evaluation of the position of the individual in his or her environment" (Cross, 1981, p. 124). Each stage of the model, beginning with a self-evaluation as to whether achievement in an educational activity is possible, is seen as a link in the chain, with each link affecting another. The more positive the individual's experience at each stage, the more likely she or he is to reach the last stage, culminating in the decision to participate (Cross, 1981). Cross points out, that perhaps the most significant factor eventually influencing the choice to participate in learning activities evolves from early success or failure with educational experiences, which affect evaluation of one's learning ability and subsequent attitudes towards education.

FAMILY LITERACY AND PARTICIPATION

Though deterrents to participation are multifaceted and deeply rooted both structurally and psychologically, there is a reciprocal nature to Cross's model; participation with positive results can enhance self- evaluation and attitudes towards school. The challenge, then, is to create learning opportunities that work simultaneously to enable children to experience early and sustained school success while, at the same time, overcoming factors that deter adult participation in educational activities by fostering positive expectations and results by adults who generally steer clear of formal or informal programs. Often, level and ease of literacy acquisition form a core component of our eventual school success and attitudes towards school. Literacy in all domains affects almost all aspects of school learning becoming pivotal in the later grades as comprehension of informational texts is used as a basis for instruction and performance outcomes (Pressley,1998).

Family and Intergenerational Contexts

Interventions aimed at improving literacy among adults has grown steadily over the years (Dickinson, 1994) as literacy has come to be viewed as a "fundamental tool necessary for successful economic performance in industrialized countries" (U.S. DOE, 1996, Indicator 21, online). With research in the area of "emergent literacy", interventions have begun to focus on family environment and the nature of interactions that ease the acquisition of literacy (Dickinson, 1994). Caring, responsive family environments that are rich in literacy interactions, such as interactive read-alouds, providing a range of print materials, and modeling positive attitudes towards literacy in the home, have a profound positive effect on children's literacy learning (Pressley, 1998). Research from several different disciplines supporting the need for positive interactions between parents and children for optimal cognitive, emotional, physical, and social development has influenced efforts to create two-generation, family programming. Family literacy is a recent intergenerational approach developed to create solutions related to issues affecting the low levels of literacy of a large proportion of children and adults in the United States and other countries around the world (Nickse & Quezada, 1995).

Components of Family Literacy Programs

Family literacy programs differ from programs aimed solely at adults or children, although, they vary widely among themselves, utilizing generally a systems approach that views the child and parent as a small learning unit and designing activities to improve the literacy of both (Nickse & Quezada, 1995). Though programs differ, there are up to four intervention routes through which participants can be encouraged to engage in programs (Morrow, 1995). These include components of early childhood education, adult education, parenting education, and intergenerational or parent-child literacy interaction. Adult learning may include attention to specific skills related, for example to job interviews, or it may involve GED preparation. Parent support groups provide a time for parents/caregivers to engage in discussion, and peer support related to parenting issues. Parent-child interaction gives parents opportunities to practice new skills they have acquired during parent group sessions with their children. Parent- child interaction sessions are child-led, and play focused rather than a formal school learning approach. The content of the program comes from the needs of the participants. Interwoven into the four components is a collaborative, community-based support system that addresses the specific needs of participants.

Studies compiled by the National Center for Family Literacy (NCFL), which evaluate the relative effectiveness of family literacy programs when compared with more traditional literacy programs aimed solely at adults or children, point to initial, higher rates of participation by adults in education programs, increased employment levels, and literacy gains. Children showed higher ratings by teachers in motivation to learn, academic performance, self-confidence, attendance, support from parents, and probable success in school. In addition, studies from programs show significant gains in psychological factors related to adults' self-evaluation (NCFL, 2000).

Community-Based and Informal Learning Practices

Effective intergenerational family literacy programs appear to integrate and capture aspects of adult education's community-based learning (informal) and uses that philosophy to inform traditional (formal) learning goals. Characteristics of community-based learning (Sissel, 1997) resonate with Paulo Freire's liberationist view of education that it be responsive to the needs of participants, recognize and respect prior knowledge, and help transform knowledge and learning into higher emancipated consciousness. This learning translates into greater self-respect and motivation to improve society through reflective action. While family literacy may not directly promote social change or challenge the status quo, it encourages participants to examine their assumptions, beliefs and attitudes about themselves as learners, school experiences, their critical role in their child's education, and their ability to affect personal change (Dickinson, 1994). The perspective of community-based learning that views the exercise of learning not as the possession or accumulating of knowledge, but as the application of learning to the immediate context of one's life (Merriam & Caffarella, 1999), is critical in defining intergenerational literacy practices.

MAINSTREAM AND COMMUNITY BASED LEARNING

In laying out the differences in programs that are community oriented rather than mainstream, Hayes and Snow (1989) compare differences in mission, type of instruction, source of problem, and outcomes. In the differences between informal and mainstream programs are clues to the ingredients of the more effective family literacy programs. The primary mission of mainstream literacy programs is the development of literacy for the individual student. Although the acquisition of literacy is a fundamental aim of community-oriented programs, the attainment of literacy becomes a tool for personal transformation (Mezirow, as cited in Merriam & Caffarella, 1999) and social change. Literacy is defined as an enabling force to achieve goals rather than a school subject taught in a way that is irrelevant to one's life and world (Morrow, 1995). By reframing literacy, it builds on participants' strengths to include a range of communication practices that are integrated into daily life in a socially significant way (Schwartz, 1999).

Community-based programming is also characterized by learning that strives to utilize group-devised methods of instruction, while traditional or mainstream programs generally use standardized curricula and "transmission" methods of instruction (Hayes & Snow, 1989). Early family literacy programs often focus on giving parents/caregivers specific guidelines, materials, and training to carry out school-like activities in the home in an attempt to transmit the culture of school literacy to the home (Auerbach, 1995). The focus of the curriculum in effective family literacy programs, rather than the "transmission of school practices model" (Auerbach, 1995, p. 8), is on empowering participants to direct their own learning and use it for their own purposes. Programs, in general, that focus on issues that capture an adult's actual life and stresses, such as housing, education, work, and health, and use them as the content of curriculum are more effective than traditional programs with standardized curriculum that do not make the content of lessons relevant to a participant's life (Hayes & Snow, 1989). In effective, intergenerational programs, literacy becomes a tool for examining and addressing these concerns.

Building on Strengths vs. Fixing Deficits

Whereas traditional programs view the source of the problem of illiteracy as a "flawed individual" who requires "fixing," community-based learning sees the problem within the larger context or system and regards the source of the problem that needs to be fixed to be the "flawed society" (Hayes & Snow, 1989). Early, less proactive, family literacy programs were based on the assumption that poor and immigrant families come from "literacy-impoverished homes" where education is not valued or supported (Auerbach, 1995; Taylor, 1993). However, there is significant evidence that many low-income, minority, and immigrant families demonstrate rich, though perhaps not school-like, literacy practices and that they "support literacy with exceptional effort and imagination" (Auerbach 1995, p. 7). Studies, in fact, suggest that the most marginalized of immigrant families, often view literacy and schooling as the path to changing their situation and preventing their children from suffering as they have. For some, the desire to get a better education for their children may even be the central reason for coming to the United States (Delgado-Gaitan, 1987).

Designing programs with the family as the learning unit not only recognizes the critical influence family members have on each other, it touches on the responsibility that an adult feels in transitioning into a parent/caregiver. Recognizing that adults experience a tension between self-absorption and generativity, family literacy builds on these valued needs rather than fixing deficits. Rather than reinforce low self-esteem among adult learners, this approach can encourage self-directed learning and greater participation in adult education (Edwards, 1995).

Taylor and Dorsey-Gaines found that families used "literacy for a wide variety of audiences, and in a wide variety of situations" (cited in Morrow, 1995, p. 10). In finding homes rich with print and literacy as an essential part of daily life, Taylor and Dorsey-Gaines assert that "it is the lack of social, political, and economic support for parents in dealing with housing, health, and other social problems that puts children at risk as opposed to lack of parental support for children's literacy development" (Morrow, 1995, p. 10). In a sense, therefore, family literacy programs encourage participation by offering support in the interweaving factors that often deter adults from engaging in programs by working from within the community to identify issues of need (Benjamin, 1993; Gasden, 1995). Family literacy participants receive support from family members, community, facilitators, collaborating agencies, and other participants.

The view that particular ways of using literacy at home may better prepare children for school success (Heath as cited in Dickinson, 1994; Morrow, 1995) is often assumed to mean that specific, structured home learning activities that families do is the key to achievement. The key to developing literacy is authentically incorporating it in everyday, socially significant ways and unobtrusively supporting children's literacy activities (Chomsky, 1979). Interestingly, in a study which first introduced the term, family literacy, Taylor (1983) examined the home literacy environment of both low and middle class proficient readers. Taylor found that parents of successful readers often used a variety of subtle literacy activities rather than formal school-like activities (Taylor, 1983).

In a study of federally funded Even Start programs, Schwartz (1999) found that the programs that were especially promising were those that created opportunities for developing traditional literacy skills while showing participants that their indigenous literacy practices are valid and important. Programs that work with adults to identify critical social issues and then use them in the curriculum as a tool to improve writing instruction encourage curriculum development that flows from the family and community to the classroom and acknowledge family and community as a central resource for learning (Morrow, 1995). In addition, those programs that help adults recognize the myriad of places and ways that they have gone about learning in their adult lives build upon participants' strengths and build their self-esteem (Merriam & Caffarella, 1995; Schwartz, 1999). Parents can begin to redefine themselves as competent individuals who have appropriated the skills that have enabled them to clothe, feed, and care for their children (Merriam & Caffarella, 1999). In so doing, not only is literacy contextually reframed but learning is defined as a doable activity that has relevance to one's life. Rather than evaluating their own abilities negatively, the potential here is for adults to perceive themselves as active and competent learners. Parents gain more confidence in seeing themselves as their child's first teacher and as an adult competent to advocate and interact with their child's school (NCFL, 2000).

CONCLUSION

Based on principles derived from models of participation, family literacy, and community-based learning practices, promising family literacy programs respect and build upon the diversity of socio-cultural literacy activities practiced by the families they serve. These programs are designed to begin

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program planning with inquiry into the issues and needs of participants' lives, with those concerns evolving into the content of the curriculum. Incorporating these practices and supports into programs develops confidence and a sense of relevancy of education for participants who may have been turned off to "school" early in their lives. By capitalizing on the strengths of the family as a learning unit and not trying to correct or fix the family, programs can extend interactions that already exist and build upon the sense of responsibility that parents, regardless of their literacy or economic level, feel toward their children's education and future. In combination these practices may ultimately increase learning opportunities by engaging participants as partners and addressing, both directly and indirectly, a range of dispositional, situational, and institutional factors. Many of these factors interact to deter individuals from persevering in their education or engaging in learning activities as adults. Perhaps insights gained from promising family literacy practices can work to inform adult education as it strives to engage a wider range of adults in bridging the equity gap of participation deemed so crucial to life-long learning for all.

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MORE THAN JUST READING AND MATH: WOMEN IN ADULT BASIC EDUCATION

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ABSTRACT: Recent research into women's learning (Belenky, et al., 1986; Caffarella, 1996; Hayes & Flannery, 2000) have done much to increase the awareness of the importance of women's learning theory to the practice of adult education. Largely missing from these studies is a detailed account of how these theories apply to women learners in an adult basic education classroom. The purpose of this study is the application of women's learning theory to real-life praxis and an examination of the teaching techniques that work with women in ABE. The issues that are addressed in this study are: 1) realizing the importance of relationships, social context and self-esteem for women learners; 2) establishing a classroom environment best suited to women learners; and 3) incorporating the goals of women learners with the outcomes of adult basic education. This paper offers insight on how teachers can incorporate theory into practice and help women reach their goals.

INTRODUCTION

The number of women participating in adult education at all levels is increasing (Hayes & Flannery, 2000). This is especially true for Adult Basic Education (ABE) programs that serve women on public assistance and from the lower economic sector. Theorists of women's learning (Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger, & Tarule, 1986; Caffarella, 1996; Hayes & Flannery, 2000) all cite the importance of connection and relationships to women learners. Furthermore other issues such as finding a voice, race and class also have an impact on how women learn (Belenky et al., 1986; Hayes & Flannery, 2000). Current practices of many of the programs that serve this population do not reflect these theories. These programs experience high rates of student dropout, low attendance and failure of participants to reach their goals. A methodology informed by theories of women's learning and a class structure that reflects the specific learning needs of women can be beneficial in addressing these problems.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND DATA SOURCE

A case study format of qualitative research was conducted by using interviews, biographical narratives, and observations to provide data about women learners in adult basic education (Cresswell, 1998). This variety of data gathering methods were used in order to collect a broad perspective of the women's learning from the perspective of themselves, the teacher and a social worker. Case study research has proven effective in helping to evaluate teaching and learning and to shape educational programming (Caffarella, 1994; Merriam, 1988) and, therefore, has been deemed appropriate for this research endeavor. Two data gathering tools were used. "The Life Portrait" (Adkins, 1985) was used to provide the basis for students to depict in pictures and present to their class a biographical narrative about the important events of their life, what brought them to the point they are at and what they want for their future. Additionally, a "learning experiences interview" which contains objective and free response questions was created for this research project. The teacher of the ABE program did the case studies, while objective observations of the women learners in this study were conducted by the social worker of the adult learning center where the class takes place. Together, these tools provided a source of data about the women's perception of their lives and learning.

The research for this paper was conducted among 24 women learners in an adult basic education program in a densely populated, suburban area of metropolitan New York City. The participants are 67% African-American, 21% Hispanic and 12% Caucasian. 62.5 % of the women are on public assistance with the rest coming from a low economic background. The women had participated in an adult basic education class for a minimum of three months and a maximum of one year.

FINDINGS

“I always try to have a relationship with the people surrounding me. I learn new things, ideas, new ways to cope with success as well as at home and with my children.” This is an excerpt from one student’s Learning Experiences survey. When asked how important are relationships in the classroom 22 women (92%) stated that getting along with others, being able to talk and developing friendships were as important as the class's subject matter. From the relationships, the women learn skills from each other. The relationships also help boost their motivation to continue in the program. Even among the 8% who stated that relationships were not important, being friendly and having a pleasant atmosphere in the class still mattered.

Twenty-three (96 %) of the women surveyed stated that their educational goals center not only on receiving an education but also on bettering their position in society. The Adult Basic Education class was for them simply the first step toward a long-range goal. Tied into this was the need to feel that they could reach their goals. Twenty (83.3%) women stated that raising their self-esteem was an important factor to success. The statement, “ I feel good about myself, I feel that I am doing great” was a common one.

Having some control over the learning process is important as well. In the survey, 87.5 % (21) of the women felt that having a measure of control in the classroom and feeling as if they have choices and freedom is necessary to their success. “I like the feeling that I have control of what I do and how much. That allows me not to strain myself. I also don’t give up because I am not doing something because someone is telling me to do it.” Having a say in what they learn, and having the freedom to participate or not or to decide what they are going to learn is important to their success. This freedom and focus on student-centered learning leads to an increasing feeling of autonomy and ownership. For the women on public assistance (62.5%) control in the classroom helps to alleviate the feeling of being forced to do something by welfare. Participating in class becomes more of a “*want to* than a *have to*.” Furthermore, when success is achieved it is perceived by the respondents as a result of their own hard work, rather than the teachers. This leads to an increase in self-esteem and motivation to continue with their goals.

The past educational experiences for 19 (79.1%) of the women were negative. The reasons for this were varied. Many of the women felt that teachers ignored them, or that they could not receive the help that they needed. The women in special education classes as children felt that as they got older and the work became harder they had less and less help. Others describe either problems with teachers or problems with other students as detrimental to their school success. For many there was an overall feeling of isolation.

Lastly, all of the women surveyed felt that the facilitator's attitude was an important factor to their success in the classroom. The most important facilitator qualities for them were a willingness to help, openness to the students' ideas and feelings, and patience. Another important quality that was stated was the facilitator's sensitivity to issues of race and class and the willingness of the facilitator to discuss these issues with them. Additionally, the women's perception that the facilitator was a learner like themselves and not an absolute authority was an important factor. The students stated that this perception of the facilitator as accessible made them more willing to attempt new skills.

ANALYSIS

Women develop differently, both cognitively and psychologically. Unlike other models of development, models that focus on women are relational. This means that women develop based on their relationships to others. According to traditional theories of development the goal of psychological development is that the individual eventually reaches a stage of individuation and separation (Covington,1998). Women, however, strive for connection to others in their development (Gilligan,1982). The Stone Center model of relational development reflects the idea of the centrality of relationships to women's development. This model suggests, "...the deepest sense of one's being is continuously formed in connection to others and is inextricably tied to relational formation" (Merriam & Caffarella, 1999, p. 111). Gilligan's work on the development of women has "traced the development of a morality organized around notions of responsibility and care" (Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger, & Tarule, 1986, p. 8). Women grow and develop through relationships and an "empathic understanding" of others. In *Women as Learners*, Hayes and Flannery discovered through their focus on women's narratives that women's stories about learning were more about trying to discover self than mastering math or skills. The researchers/authors also found that the stories about learning were stories of women learning together.

This "connectiveness" is borne out by the responses of the women. The importance of establishing relationships and what is learned from those relationships was a large factor to the success of the students. For many, the feeling of a classroom community helped them. "We help each other" is a common feeling among the women. That is not to say that the women only want to socialize, or to say, as Hayes and Flannery (2000) caution not to, that all women learn this way, but to realize the importance of the learner's relationship with other learners and the facilitator. These relationships teach, and help women stay motivated and involved in the learning process.

Caffarella (1994) suggests that facilitators create a learning climate in which students and facilitators support each other in the learning process. She states that, "a climate of mutual respect, trust, honesty, and openness to multiple perspectives is foundational to a cooperative pattern of communication" (1996, p. 40). Facilitators should set ground rules for classroom communication that "minimize negative stereotypes around gender, race, and class that can interfere with women's mastery of subject matter" (Hayes & Flannery, 2000, p. 197). Also important is the facilitator's recognition and appreciation of the students' experience (Apps, 1991). Hayes (1989) defines this as a holistic approach to learning. Collaborative learning allows women to become involved in the subject matter more completely. By so doing, they begin to develop their own perspective and voice.

"I have a right to express my opinion." "I can give my opinions on how I feel." "I have freedom of speech in class and I can express myself freely with others and not feel afraid." These quotes from different women illustrate the importance of women learners being able to voice how they feel. The fact that they can communicate freely and feel that they not only can give their opinions, but also that their opinions matter is a significant factor to their success in the classroom. Many of these women felt ignored or silenced in other situations. Hayes and Flannery (2000) point out that this feeling is common among women learners. By being able to speak, and being listened to the women began to feel greater power and a greater sense of self-esteem.

In *Women as Learners*, there is a story about baby girls set adrift on a river and rescued by a village. Eventually a whole industry grows up around the rescue. Following the story are some questions designed to facilitate reflections on practice with women learners. Among the reflections engendered issues were: adult educators as rescuers, reconciling program requirements with women's learning needs. The overall meaning was that adult educators must look at their practice in relation to "broader social contexts" (Hayes & Flannery, 2000, pp. 189-193). When working with women learners, adult educators must create an atmosphere that allows women to establish relationships as well as develop a sense of autonomy. In order to achieve this balance the facilitator has to give up some of the control of the classroom to the students. The women surveyed felt that it was easier to feel in control when the facilitator did not seem like an authority. Furthermore, the story illustrated that when teachers set out to "rescue" students in doing so they place the students in a passive role. This outside intervention hurts rather then helps because it delays the learner's growth towards autonomy and self-sufficiency.

IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE

The integration of women's learning theory with practice can be accomplished in many ways. As one considers the implications for viewing ABE women learners' through this perspective, several examples can demonstrate these principles in action.

In Adult Basic Education classes the focus is largely on raising skill levels in reading and math. For many funded programs, raising skill levels within a certain period of time is necessary for funding. Many ABE classes have open admission. Due to the differences in skill levels many facilitators hand out individual work. There are not many instructional techniques used that encourage social interaction or relationship building in this format. Hayes and Flannery (2000) confirm that in many education classes it is perceived that when women talk together they are not serious about the learning process. In *Women as Learners* they say that talk is extremely important (Hayes & Flannery, 2000). This talk does not necessarily have to be about the subject matter at hand but about anything, from relationships to food shopping. Hayes and Flannery point out that the perception that "off-task" discussion can be beneficial; women learn from the conversations with others and from the relationships formed. In order to foster conversations and activities, the classroom should be structured where students have space to sit together and talk quietly. Tables instead of desks, or desks arranged in a circle accomplish this goal. Lessons and activities that involve students working together also help students establish relationships. In addition, differing skill levels become less of a problem when small groups are used in the learning process. When learners feel safe with each other they feel safe asking a fellow student for help. In the ABE class studied, many students have "learning partners," fellow students that they work with on a continual basis. Based on their comments, helping each other is perceived as increasing self-esteem and encouraging self-sufficiency.

In order to establish a truly collaborative environment, a teacher must first become aware of and address the issue of authority. "Authority can arise form a variety of sources. Teachers traditionally are viewed as authorities by virtue of their expertise in a particular field. As they impart knowledge, a hierarchical relationship arises between them and their students" (Middlecamp & Subramaniam, 1999, p. 521). At this time, most students have experienced primarily traditional education so they expect the teacher to act like the authority. For Temporary Aid to Needy Families (TANF, formerly Welfare) students there is the added authority of welfare regulations. There are also issues of authority that relate to race and class. Teachers need to transfer some of the authority of the classroom and the learning process to the adult learners. Class contracts are one way this transfer can be facilitated. Discussing student goals, current grade levels and developing a personal learning plan are also effective. The facilitator can also explain why the student needs to learn a certain topic. For example, a particular student may need to learn area in order to successfully pass the GED. By explaining why, the learner now has a motivation to learn it. They are learning because it is something they need not something that they just have to know.

Another way of teacher and learners sharing authority in the classroom may be by building situations where the students teach what they know. Sharing recipes or having the students teach a craft are good ideas. In the ABE class surveyed the class plays the card game, Spades. It is not really the game that is important it is what happens during the game. The women had to teach the facilitator how to play. When the class played Spades, the teacher was no longer the expert; instead, the students were and the teacher became the learner. This situation offers students a chance to demonstrate an expertise that they normally do not have an opportunity to express. This changing of roles does much to foster a collaborative learning environment. Berling (1999) states that in order for collaborative learning to occur "the teacher needs to establish herself/himself early as something other than 'the sole expert' (p. 46). The facilitator's willingness to let the learner become the expert enables a transfer of authority to take place. Middlecamp and Subramanian (1999) suggest that "fostering multiple authorities allows different classroom dynamics and voices to emerge" (p. 523). In such settings, the learners become more empowered to take a greater role in the classroom.

CONCLUSION

In the studies of women's development and social behavior womens interpersonal orientations and responsive qualities are conceptualized not as weaknesses but as strengths. This work gives us a new appreciation of women's abilities to develop caring, supportive relationships and the value of such relationships for promoting individual learning and development (Hayes, 1989, p. 58). The women surveyed have bonded. They cook for each other, celebrate birthdays, give each other advice and help each other learn. They celebrate success and commiserate with disappointment. The women learners in the class have become a family and a community. It is something that they have created and nurtured themselves. This is a result of providing a learning environment where women learners can be free to, and feel safe in, using their voices and each other to learn and grow. They assume control and authority over the learning process and can also begin to do so in their lives. In this situation, the facilitator is no longer the teacher; he or she is part of a group of women working together toward a goal. By providing a setting where women in Adult Basic Education programs can relate and communicate by learning, it has been demonstrated that classes can incorporate the recommendations of theorists of women's learning and meet program and individual goals in the process. Further inquiry among this population of ABE learners could provide additional insights into women's learning, dynamics of teaching and learning and program planning. This sector of adult learners seems to have been overlooked in such research and discussions in this past.

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